

KINGS.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOKS I. AND II.

THE Greek translators, known as the LXX., who separated the "Book of the Law of Moses" into five parts, and the "Book of Samuel" into two, made the division, which is now almost universally adopted, of the original "Book of Kings" into a "First" and a "Second Book." The separation thus made was followed naturally in the early Latin Versions, which were formed from the Greek; and when Jerome set forth the edition now called "The Vulgate," he followed the custom which he found established. The general adoption of the Vulgate by the Western Church caused the arrangement introduced by the LXX. to obtain almost universal acceptance.

The work is named from its contents, since the entire subject of the whole is the history of the "Kings" of Israel and Judah from the accession of Solomon to the Babylonish captivity.

1. The unity of the work is proved by the marked and striking simplicity and regularity of the plan. The work is, from first to last a history of the kings in strict chronological order, on the same system, and on a uniform scale. Exceptions to this uniformity in the larger space bestowed on the reigns of a few monarchs¹ are due to the

principle of treating with the greatest fulness the parts of the history theocratically of most importance.

A second evidence of unity is the general uniformity of style and language—a uniformity admitted by all writers, and one which is only slightly infringed in two or three instances, where the irregularity may be accounted for by a diversity in the sources used by the author and a close following of the language which he found in those sources.²

To these general heads of evidence may be added certain peculiarities of thought or expression which pervade the two Books, all of them indicating with greater or less certainty a single author.³

Hezekiah (2 K. xviii.-xx.), and Josiah (2 K. xxii. and xxiii.).

² *e.g.* In the first chapter of the First Book peculiarities of diction occur which connect it with the Books of Samuel, and are sufficiently explained by the supposition that in this part of his work the author of Kings drew from a source which had been used also by the author of Samuel. The narratives in 2 Kings iv. 1-37, and viii. 1-6, contain some remarkable Aramaic forms, which have been regarded as evidences of late composition, but which are, it is probable, provincialisms—peculiarities of an Israelite author contemporary (or nearly so) with Elisha, whose words the compiler of Kings preserved unaltered.

³ *e.g.* The formulæ which introduce and close the reign of almost every king, or which describe the ordinary sinfulness of the Israelite monarchs; others are less palpable and evident, and therefore the more thoroughly to be relied

¹ As Solomon (1 K. i.-xi.), Jeroboam (1 K. xii. 25-xiv. 20), Ahab (1 K. xvi. 29-xxii. 40), Jehoram (2 K. iii.-ix. 26),

2. Some have thought from the continuity of the narrative, from the general resemblance of the style, and from the common employment of a certain number of words and phrases, that the six "Books," commencing with Judges and terminating with the Second Book of Kings, are the production of a single writer, and constitute in reality a single unbroken composition. Others consider these arguments far from conclusive. The continuity of the narrative is formal, and may be due to the after arrangements of a reviser, such as Ezra is commonly believed to have been.

So far as the mere idiom of the language goes, it is perhaps true that we cannot draw a marked line between Kings and Samuel. But many of the traits most characteristic of the writer of Kings are wholly wanting in the other (and probably earlier) composition. For these and other reasons the "Books of Kings" may claim distinctness and separateness.⁴

3. There are two grounds upon which, apart from all traditional

notices, the date of a historical work may be determined, viz., the peculiarities of the diction, and the contents.

The language of Kings belongs unmistakably to the period of the Captivity. It is later than that of Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Joel, and Nahum, earlier than that of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah.⁵ In general character it bears a close resemblance to the language of Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and may be assigned to the sixth century before our era.

The result obtainable from the contents is similar, only somewhat more definite. Assuming the last detached section of the work (2 K. xxv. 27-30) to be an integral portion of it, we obtain the year B.C. 561—the first year of Evil-Merodach—as the earliest possible date of the completion of the composition.⁶ Again, from the fact that the work contains no allusion at all to the return of the Jews from their Captivity, we obtain for the latest possible date the year B.C. 538, the year of the return under

upon: such as the habit of express allusion to the Law of Moses (1 K. ii. 3, vi. 12, &c.; 2 K. x. 31, xi. 12, &c.); the perpetual reference to God's choice of David and of Jerusalem (1 K. viii. 16, 29, ix. 3, &c.; 2 K. xx., xxi. 4); the constant use of the phrase "man of God," (which occurs in Kings at least fifty-three times, and in twelve distinct chapters. In Samuel it is used about five times in two chapters. In Chronicles it is used six times—in four chapters); the habit of frequently prefixing the word "king" to the names of monarchs; and the like.

⁴ *c.g.* References to the Book of the Law, so constant in Kings, nowhere occur in Samuel. Samuel is incomplete and vague in respect of dates, which in Kings are given with extraordinary precision. The author of Samuel nowhere makes any mention of his sources, while the author of Kings is constantly alluding to his.

The favourite usages of the writer of Kings, such as his employment of the phrase "man of God," and his habit of prefixing the word "king" to the names of monarchs, although not absolutely unknown to the writer of Samuel, are with him comparatively rare and unfamiliar. Each character who is brought upon the scene, however familiar to one acquainted with Samuel, is given a descriptive epithet, such as, "the prophet," "the priest," "the son of," &c., as if previously unknown, when first introduced.

⁵ The words and phrases which have been thought to indicate a later date than the time of the Captivity can be shown, in almost every instance, to have been in use during that time, or even previously.

⁶ The rest of the work may have been written as early as B.C. 580, and the section in question may have been added afterwards.

Zerubbabel : or in other words between the death of Nebuchadnezzar and the accession of Cyrus in Babylon. Linguistic and other considerations favour the belief that the actual completion was early in this period—about B.C. 560; and it is not improbable that the greater part of the work was written as early as B.C. 580—i.e. some twenty years previously.

4. Jewish tradition assigns the authorship of Kings to Jeremiah; and there are very weighty arguments in favour of this view. There is a very remarkable affinity between the language of Kings and that of the admitted writings of the Prophet.⁷ The matter moreover, of the two works, so far as the same events are treated, is in the closest harmony,⁸ those points being especially singled out for insertion, of which Jeremiah had personal knowledge and in which he took peculiar interest. Another argument of very considerable force is drawn from the entire omission of any notice at all of Jeremiah in Kings, which would have been very strange and unnatural in any other historian, considering the important part which Jeremiah played in the transactions of so many reigns, but which is completely intelligible on the hypothesis of his authorship of Kings: it is then the natural fruit and sign of a becoming modesty and unselfishness.

Still, though Jeremiah's author-

ship appears, all things considered, to be highly probable, we must admit that it has not been proved, and is therefore to some extent uncertain.

5. The author of Kings cites as authorities on the subject-matter of his history three works: (1) the "Book of the Acts of Solomon" (xi. 41); (2) the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" (xiv. 19, &c.); and (3) the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" (xiv. 29, &c.). His own history was, at least in part, derived from these works. Lesser works were also open to him.⁹ Further, the writer had probably access to a work of a different character from any of those quoted by the author of Chronicles, namely, a collection of the miracles of Elisha, made probably in one of the schools of the Prophets.

Hence the sources of Kings may be considered threefold, consisting, first, of certain general historical documents called the "Books of the Chronicles of the Kings;" secondly, of some special treatises on the history of particular short periods; and, thirdly, of a single work of a very peculiar character, the private biography of a remarkable man.

The "Books of the Chronicles of the Kings" were probably of the nature of public Archives,¹ State-annals, that is, containing an ac-

⁷ e.g. Cp. 2 K. xvii. 14 and Jer. vii. 26; 2 K. xvii. 15 and Jer. ii. 5; 1 K. viii. 25 and Jer. xxxiii. 17; 2 K. xxi. 12 and Jer. xix. 3; 2 K. xxii. 17 and Jer. vii. 20, &c.

⁸ Compare 2 K. xxiii. 34 with Jer. xxii. 12; 2 K. xxiv. 1 with Jer. xxv. 1-9; 2 K. xxiv. 7 with Jer. xli. 2-12; 2 K. xxv. 1-12 with Jer. xxxix. 1-10, &c.

⁹ Such as the following:—"The Chronicles of King David" (1 Chr. xxvii. 24), "The Acts of Samuel the Seer," "The Acts of Nathan the Prophet," "The Acts of Gad the Seer" (1 Chr. xxix. 29), "The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite," "The Visions of Iddo the Seer against Jeroboam the Son of Nebat" (2 Chr. ix. 29), "The Acts of Shemaiah the Prophet," "Iddo the Seer on Genealogies" (2 Chr. xii. 15), "The Commentary of the Prophet Iddo" (2 Chr. xiii. 22), and the like.

¹ See Esther ii. 23, vi. 1, x. 2.

count of the chief public events in the reign of each king, drawn up by an authorised person. With the Israelites the authorised person was probably in almost every case a Prophet. The Prophets regarded this as one of their principal duties, as we see by the examples of Isaiah (2 Chr. xxvi. 22; Is. xxxvi. -xxxviii.), Jeremiah (xxxix.-xliii. 7; lii.), and Daniel (i.-vi.). At the close of every reign, if not even in its course, an addition was probably made to the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings" by the Prophet who held the highest position at the period.²

But the Prophets, in addition to these formal official writings, composed also historical works which were on a somewhat larger scale, and were especially more full in the account which they gave of religious matters. Cp. for example, the difference between the prophetic monograph and the drier abstract of the "Book of the Chronicles," contained in the historical chapters of Isaiah (xxxvi.-xxxix.), and the parallel chapters of the Second Book of Kings (xviii.-xx.). Cp. also Jer. xxxix.-xlv. with 2 K. xxv. 1-26. Further, comparing generally the

history as given in Chronicles with the corresponding history in Kings, the author of Chronicles seems to have followed generally the separate works of the various prophetic writers:³ the author of Kings, mainly the official documents. In Chronicles nothing is more noticeable than the greater fullness of the *religious* history of Judah.⁴ This came chiefly from the several prophetic works, and marks a contrast between their character and the ordinary character of the State-annals.

The writer of Kings was *mainly* a compiler. He selected, arranged, and wove into a whole, the various narratives of earlier writers whereof he made use. This is evident, both from the retention of obsolete or provincial forms in particular narratives, and from the occurrence of a number of statements which were inappropriate at the time when the compiler wrote.⁵ The close verbal agreement between 2 Kings xviii. 15-xx. 19, and Isaiah xxxvi.-xxxix., can only have arisen from the writer's extracting without alteration Isaiah's

² See the "Introd. to Chronicles," and compare 1 Chr. xxix. 29; 2 Chr. ix. 29, xii. 15, xiii. 22, &c.

³ See particularly 1 Chr. xxii. 1-19, xxviii. 1-21, xxix. 1-22; 2 Chr. ii. 3-16, xiii. 4-18, &c.

⁴ Of this kind are the following:—1. The statement in 1 K. viii. 8, that the staves of the Ark continued where they were placed by Solomon. 2. The statement that the bondage of the Amorites, Hivites, &c., continued (1 K. ix. 21). 3. The assertion that Israel was still in rebellion against the house of David (do. xii. 19). 4. The declaration that Selah (Petra) kept the name of Joktheel, which Amaziah gave it (2 K. xiv. 7). 5. The assignment of a preference over all other kings of Judah, previous and subsequent, both to Hezekiah (2 K. xviii. 5) and to Josiah (ib. xxiii. 25).

⁵ Thus the "Book of the Acts of Solomon" was perhaps begun by Nathan, and was concluded either by Ahijah the Shilonite or by Iddo the Seer (2 Chr. ix. 29). The "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" was probably the work of Shemaiah (2 Chr. xii. 15), Iddo (do. xiii. 22), Jehu the son of Hanani (do. xx. 34), Isaiah (do. xxvi. 22), Jeremiah, and others of the prophetic order, each of whom wrote the history of the king or kings with whom he was himself contemporary. Similarly with the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel," Israelitish prophets such as Ahijah, Micaiah the son of Imlah (1 K. xxii. 8), Elisha, and Jonah (2 K. xiv. 25), composed portions.

account of the reign of Hezekiah as it occurred in the State-annals: and the verbal agreement between great part of Chronicles and Kings, is often best accounted for by supposing that the two writers made *verbatim* extracts from the same authority.

On the other hand the writer of Kings sometimes departed from the wording of his authors, and substituted expressions purely his own.⁶

And there are passages evidently original.⁷ It is on these parts of the work that the argument in favour of Jeremiah's authorship especially rests.

6. Philologically speaking the general condition of the text is good.⁸ But the historian has to lament an unsoundness, which, though affecting in no degree the religious character of the books, detracts from their value as documents wherein is contained an important portion of the world's civil history. The numbers, as they have come down to us in Kings, are untrustworthy, being in part self-contradictory, in part

opposed to other scriptural notices,⁹ in part improbable, if not even impossible.¹ The defect would seem to have arisen from two causes, one common to the Hebrew Scriptures, the other peculiar to these Books. The common cause is corruption, partly from the fact that error in them is rarely checked by the context, partly from the circumstance that some system of abbreviated numerical notation² has been adopted by professional scribes, and that the symbols employed by them have been mistaken one for another. The peculiar cause of error seems to have been insertions into the text of chronological notes originally made in the margin by a commentator. The first date which occurs (1 K. vi. 1) seems to be a gloss of this cha-

⁹ The date in 1 K. vi. 1, contradicts the Chronology of Judges and Samuel, as well as Acts xiii. 20; 1 K. xiv. 21, is at variance with ch. xii. The accession of Jehoram is variously placed in 2 K. i. 17 and 2 K. iii. 1; 2 K. xv. 1 is irreconcilable with 2 K. xiv. 23; xvii. 1 with xv. 30, &c.

¹ Thus Josiah (according to the present numbers) must have been born to Amon when the latter was sixteen, Jehoiakim to Josiah when Josiah was fourteen, and Hezekiah to Ahaz when Ahaz was only *eleven*! See 2 K. xviii. 2 note.

² Abbreviated forms of numerical notation are exceedingly ancient, and appear to have prevailed in all the great Oriental monarchies, notably in Egypt and Babylonia. The Hebrews certainly employed letters for numbers, in the same way as they do at present, as early as the time of the Maccabees; and it is probable that they employed either this or some other method of abbreviation from a much earlier date, perhaps even from the time of the Exodus. The full expression of the numbers in the sacred text belongs probably to the Talmudical period of superstitious regard for the mere letter of Scripture—the time when the characters were counted, when central letters were determined, and the practice commenced of writing them large.

⁶ *c. g.* The phrase "across the river" (1 K. iv. 24) would not have been used to designate the tract west of the Euphrates by a Jew writing in Palestine in the reign of Solomon or Rehoboam. A contemporary of Jeroboam would not have spoken of "the cities of *Samaria*" (do. xiii. 32). The annals of Joash, son of Jehoahaz, did not, we may be sure, contain a statement that "God cast not Israel from his presence *as yet*" (2 K. xiii. 23).

⁷ Besides the *formulae* at the beginning and end of reigns, the same hand may be traced in 2 K. xvii. 7-41, xxi. 7-16, xxiii. 26, 27, xxiv. 3, 4, 6-20, xxv. 1-30.

⁸ Almost the only passages where the question of the true reading is of much importance are 1 K. xi. 25, and 2 K. xvi. 6, in both which cases it is suspected that "Edom," should be read for "Syria."

acter, and it may be suspected that to a similar origin is due the whole series of synchronisms between the dynasties of Israel and Judah. It is probable that the original work gave simply the years assigned to each king in the "Books of the Chronicles," without entering upon the further question, in what regnal year of the contemporary monarch in the sister kingdom each prince ascended the throne. The chief difficulties of the chronology, and almost all the actual contradictions, disappear if we subtract from the work these portions.³

Excepting in this respect, the Books of Kings have come down to us, as to all essentials, in a thoroughly sound condition. The only place where the LXX. Version differs importantly from the Hebrew text is in 1 Kings xii., where a long passage concerning Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, not now found in the Hebrew, occurs between *vv.* 24 and 25. But this passage is clearly no part of the original narrative. It is a story after the fashion of the apocryphal Esdras, worked up out of the Scripture facts, with additions, which the Alexandrian writer may have taken from some Jewish authority whereto he had access, but which certainly did not come from the writer of Kings. None of its facts except possibly a single one—the age, namely, of Rehoboam at his accession⁴—belongs

to the real narrative of our historian.

7. The primary character of the work is undoubtedly historical. It is the main object of the writer to give an account of the kings of Israel and Judah from Solomon's accession to the captivity of Zedekiah.

The history is, however, written—not, like most history, from a civil, but from a religious point of view. The Jews are regarded, not as an ordinary nation, but as God's people. The historian does not aim at exhibiting the mere political progress of the kingdoms about which he writes, but intends to describe to us God's treatment of the race with which He had entered into covenant. Where he records the events of the civil history, his plan is to trace out the fulfilment of the combined warning and promise which had been given to David (2 S. vii. 12-16).

Hence events, which an ordinary historian would have considered of great importance, may be (and are) omitted by our author from the narrative; or touched slightly and hastily.⁵ As a general rule, the military history of the two kingdoms, which was no doubt carefully recorded in the "Books of the Chronicles," is omitted by

³ Thus he takes no notice at all of the expedition of Zerah the Ethiopian (2 Chr. xiv. 9-15, xvi. 8); of Jehoshaphat's war with Moab, Ammon, and Edom (2 Chr. xx. 1-25); of Uzziah's successes against the Philistines (*do.* xxvi. 6-8); of Manasseh's capture by the Assyrians (*do.* xxxiii. 11-13). He treats with the utmost brevity the conquest of Jerusalem by Shishak (1 K. xiv. 25, 26), the war between Abijah and Jeroboam (*do.* xv. 7), that of Amaziah with Edom (2 K. xiv. 7), and that of Josiah with Pharaoh-Nechoh (*do.* xxiii. 29); events treated at length in the parallel passages of the Book of Chronicles.

³ As for instance in 1 K. xvi. 22, 23:—"So Tibni died, and Omri reigned. [In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah] Omri reigned over Israel twelve years." Here the removal of the words in brackets would evidently improve the sense.

⁴ See note on 1 K. xii. 8, 10.

the writer of Kings, who is content for the most part to refer his readers to the State-annals for the events which would have made the greatest figure in an ordinary secular history.

On the other hand, the special aim of the writer induces him to assign a prominent place and to give a full treatment to events which a secular historian would have touched lightly or passed over in silence. The teaching of the prophets, and their miracles, were leading points in the religious history of the time; it was owing to them especially that the apostacy of the people was without excuse; therefore the historian who has to show that, despite the promises made to David, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the whole twelve tribes carried into captivity, must exhibit fully the grounds for this severity, and must consequently dwell on circumstances which so intensely aggravated the guilt of the people.

The character of the history that he has to relate, its general tendency and ultimate issue, naturally throw over his whole narrative an air of gloom. The tone of the work thus harmonises with that of Jeremiah's undoubted writings, and furnishes an additional argument in favour of that Prophet's authorship.

The style of Kings is, for the most part, level and uniform—a simple narrative style. Occasionally a more lofty tone is breathed, the style rising with the subject-matter, and becoming in places almost poetical (1 K. xix. 11, 12; 2 K. xix. 21-31). The most striking chapters are the eighth, eighteenth, and nineteenth of the First Book; the fifth, ninth, eight-

eenth, nineteenth, and twentieth of the Second.

8. The general authenticity of the narrative contained in our Books is admitted. Little is denied or questioned but the miraculous portions of the story, which cluster chiefly about the persons of Elijah and Elisha. Some critics admitting that the narrative generally is derived from authentic contemporary documents—either State-annals or the writings of contemporary Prophets—maintain that the histories of Elijah and Elisha come from an entirely different source, being (they hold) collections of traditions respecting those persons made many years after their deaths, either by the writer of Kings or by some other person, from the mouths of the common people. Hence, according to them, their “legendary” or “mythical” character.

But there are no critical grounds for separating off the account of Elijah, or more than a small portion of the account of Elisha,⁶ from the rest of the composition. The history of Elijah especially is so intertwined with that of the kingdom of Israel, and is altogether of so public a nature, that the “Chronicles of the Kings of Israel” would almost necessarily have contained an account of it; and an important part of the history of Elisha is of a similar character. Further, it is quite gratuitous to imagine that the account was not a contemporary one, or that it was left for a writer living long subsequently to collect into a volume the doings of these remarkable personages. The proba-

⁶ 2 K. iv. 1-37, and viii. 1-6, form the exceptions to the general rule.

bility is quite the other way. As the Prophets themselves were the historians of the time, it would be only natural that Elisha should collect the miracles and other remarkable deeds of Elijah; and that his own should be collected after his decease by some one of the "sons of the Prophets." Add to this that the miracles, as related, have all the air of descriptions derived from eye-witnesses, being full of such minute circumstantial detail as tradition cannot possibly preserve. The whole result would seem to be that (unless we reject miracles altogether as unworthy of belief on account of an *à priori* impossibility) the account of the two great Israelite Prophets in Kings must be regarded as entitled to acceptance equally with the rest of the narrative.

Both internal consistency and probability, and also external testimony, strongly support the general authenticity of the secular history contained in Kings. The empire of Solomon is of a kind with which early Oriental history makes us familiar; it occurs exactly at a period when there was room for its creation owing to the simultaneous weakness of Egypt and Assyria; its rapid spread, and still more rapid contraction, are in harmony with our other records of Eastern dominion; its art and civilization resemble those known to have prevailed about the same time in neighbouring countries. The contact of Judea with Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia, during the period covered by our Books agrees with the Egyptian annals, and in some respects is most strikingly illustrated by the cuneiform inscriptions. Berosus, Manetho, Mo-

nander, Dius—the heathen historians of Babylon, Egypt, and Tyre—join with the monuments in the support which they furnish to our author's truthfulness and accuracy, as the comment appended to the text will prove abundantly.

Even the broader features of the chronology are both internally probable, and externally confirmed by the chronologies of other countries. The interval between the accession of Solomon and the captivity of Zedekiah is given as 433½ years,⁷ which is divided among twenty-one monarchs, who belong to eighteen (or, excluding Jehoiachin, to seventeen) generations. This allows for each generation the very probable term of 25½ years. During the portion of the history where the chronology is double, and where the chief internal difficulties occur, the divergence of the two schemes is but slight, amounting to no more than about twenty years in 240 or 250. Egyptian annals confirm approximately the Biblical dates for Shishak's invasion, and So's alliance. The Assyrian annals agree with the Hebrew in the date of the fall of Samaria, and in exhibiting Hazael and Jehu, Tiglath-Pileser and Ahaz, Sennacherib and Hezekiah, Esarhaddon and Manasseh, as contemporaries. The chronological difficulties, where such exist, do not at all exceed those with which every reader of profane historians is familiar, and which, in fact, pervade the whole of ancient chron-

⁷ This number is obtained by adding together the years of the kings of Judah. If parts of years are throughout counted as full years, this number is somewhat in excess. Clinton makes the actual time 429 years.

ology. They are partly to be accounted for by diversities in the mode of reckoning;⁸ while occasion-

ally no doubt they result from a corrupt reading, or from an unauthorised interpolation.

⁸ In some systems, fractions of years are reckoned as years; in others, they are omitted altogether. In some, years are longer; in others, shorter than the true

astronomical year. The differences which result from these causes mount up to something considerable in the course of centuries.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS, COMMONLY CALLED, THE THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS.

CHAP. 1. NOW king David was old *and*¹ stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. Wherefore his 2 servants said unto him, ²Let there be sought for my lord the king ³a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her ⁴cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the 3 king may get heat. So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a "Shunammite, 4 and brought her to the king. And the damsel *was* very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king 5 knew her not. ¶Then ⁵Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will ⁶be king: and ⁶he prepared him chariots 6 and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. And his father had not displeased him ⁶at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also *was* a very goodly man; ⁶and *his mother*

^a Josh. 19. 18.

^b 2 Sam. 3. 4.

^c 2 Sam. 15. 1.

^d 2 Sam. 3. 3, 4.

1 Chr. 3. 2.

¹ Heb. *entered into days.*

² Heb. *Let them seek.*

³ Heb. *a damsel, a virgin.*

⁴ Heb. *be a cherisher unto him.*

⁵ Heb. *reign.*

⁶ Heb. *from his days.*

I. 1. *Now*] Rather, "and." The conjunction has here, probably, the same sort of connecting force which it has at the opening of Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, &c., and implies that the historian regards his work as a *continuation* of a preceding history.

king David] The expression "*king David*," instead of the simpler "*David*," is characteristic of the writer of Kings. (See *Introd.*, p. 264, notes 3, 4.) The phrase is comparatively rare in Chronicles and Samuel.

stricken in years] David was perhaps now in his 71st year. He was thirty years old when he was made king in Hebron (2 Sam. v. 4); he reigned in Hebron seven years and six months (2 Sam. ii. 11; 1 Chr. iii. 4); and he reigned thirty-three years at Jerusalem (2 Sam. v. 5). The expression had hitherto been used only of persons above eighty (Gen. xviii. 11, xxiv. 1; Josh. xiii. 1, xxiii. 1): but the Jews at this time were not long-lived. No Jewish monarch after David, excepting Solomon and Manasseh, exceeded sixty years.

clothes] Probably "bed-clothes." The king was evidently bed-ridden (r. 47).

2. As the Jewish law allowed polygamy, David's conduct in following—what has been said to have been—physician's advice, was blameless.

5. The narrative concerning Abishag, the Shunammite (see *marg. ref. a*), is introduced as necessary for a proper understanding of Adonijah's later history (see ii. 13—

25.) But even as it stands, it heightens considerably the picture drawn of the poor king's weak and helpless condition, of which Adonijah was not ashamed to take advantage for his own aggrandisement. Adonijah was born while David reigned at Hebron, and was therefore now between thirty-three and forty years of age. He was David's fourth son, but had probably become the eldest by the death of his three older brothers. He claimed the crown by right of primogeniture (ii. 15), and secretly to his partisans (cp. r. 10) announced his intention of assuming the sovereignty. It was well known to him, and perhaps to the Jews generally, that David intended to make Solomon his successor (r. 13).

to run before him] That is, he assumed the same quasi-royal state as Absalom had done, when he contemplated rebellion (2 Sam. xv. 1).

6. *had not displeased him*] i.e. "His father had never checked or thwarted him all his life."

a very goodly man] Here, too, Adonijah resembled Absalom (2 Sam. xiv. 25). The Jews, like the other nations of antiquity, regarded the physical qualities of rulers as of great importance, and wished their kings to be remarkable for strength, stature, and beauty (1 Sam. ix. 2). Adonijah's personal advantages no doubt helped to draw the people to him.

his mother, &c.] i.e. Haggith bare Adonijah after Maacah bare Absalom (2 Sam. iii. 3, 4). The words in italics are not in the

- 7 bare him after Absalom. And ¹he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with ²Abiathar the priest: and ³they ⁴following Adonijah helped him. But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and ⁵Shimei, and Rei, and ⁶the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah. And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoholeth, which is by ⁷En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants: but Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.
- 11 ¶ Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of David doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not? Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.
- 12 Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, ⁸Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and ⁹confirm thy words. ¶ And Bath-sheba went in

¹ Heb. his words were with Joab.

² Heb. helped after Adonijah.
³ Or, The well Rogel, 2 Sam.

17. 17.
⁴ Heb. all up.

original; hence some, by a slight alteration, read "David begat him."

7. Joab's defection on this occasion, after his faithful adherence to David during the troubles caused by Absalom (2 Sam. xviii. 2-17), may be accounted for by his fear that Solomon would be a "man of rest" (1 Chr. xxii. 9) and by his preference for the character of Adonijah. He may also have thought that Adonijah, as the eldest son (v. 5), had almost a right to succeed.

Abiathar's defection is still more surprising than Joab's. For his history, see 1 Sam. xxii. 20 note. Hitherto David and he had been the firmest of friends. It has been conjectured that he had grown jealous of Zadok, and feared being supplanted by him.

8. There is some difficulty in understanding how Zadok and Abiathar came to be both "priests" at this time, and in what relation they stood to one another. The best explanation seems to be that Abiathar was the real High-Priest, and officiated at the Sanctuary containing the Ark of the Covenant in Zion, while Zadok performed the offices of chief priest at the Tabernacle of Witness at Gibeon (1 Chr. xvi. 39).

For Benaiah, see 2 Sam. viii. 18, xx. 23, xxxiii. 20, 21. For Nathan, see 2 Sam. vii. 2, 3, 17, xii. 1-15, 25. As privy to all David's plans (v. 24), he had no doubt fully approved the order of succession which the king was known to intend.

Shimei and Rei] Shimei and Rei are perhaps David's two brothers, Shimma and Raddai (1 Chr. ii. 13, 14).

mighty men] Probably the company of 600, originally formed during David's early wan-

derings (1 Sam. xxv. 13, xxvii. 2), and afterwards maintained as the most essential element of his standing army.

9. Adonijah's feast was probably of a sacrificial character, and intended to inaugurate him as king. Cp. the "sacrifices" of Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 12).

Zoholeth] No satisfactory explanation has been given of this name. Large blocks of stone always attract attention in the East, and receive names which are often drawn from some trivial circumstance. Sinai and Palestine are full of such *Hajars*, which correspond to the *Ebens* or "stones" of Holy Scripture. (Cp. Gen. xxviii. 22; Josh. iv. 9; 1 Sam. vi. 14.) For En-Rogel, see marg. ref.

11. the son of Haggith] Cp. marg. ref. This expression was well chosen to touch the pride of Bath-sheba. "Adonijah; not thy son, but the son of thy rival, Haggith."

12. It would have been in accordance with general Eastern custom for Solomon to suffer death, if Adonijah had succeeded in his attempt. But to have executed his mother also would have been an unusual severity. Still, such cases sometimes occurred: Cassander put to death Roxana, the widow of Alexander the Great, at the same time with her son, the young Alexander.

14. confirm thy words] "Establish" them, by giving a second testimony. Nathan thinks it best to move David's affections first through Bath-sheba, before he comes in to discuss the matter as one of state policy, and to take the king's orders upon it.
15. into the chamber] The "bed-chamber"

- unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old;
 16 and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the
 17 king said, 'What wouldest thou? And she said unto him, My
 1st ver. 13, 30. lord, 'thou swearest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth;
 2nd ver. 7, 8, 9, 25. 19 and now, my lord the king, thou knowest *it* not: "and he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall ²sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted ²offenders.
 22 ¶ And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?
 3rd ver. 10. 25 °For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, ²God save king Adonijah. But me, *even* me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed *it* unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him? ¶ Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came
 4th 1 Sam. 10. 24. 26 save king Adonijah. But me, *even* me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed *it* unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him? ¶ Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came
 5th 2 Sam. 4. 0. 29 'into the king's presence, and stood before the king. And the king sware, and said, °As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed

¹ Heb. *What to thee?*² Heb. *sinner.*³ Heb. *Let king Adonijah live.*⁴ Heb. *before the king.*

or "inner chamber." Abishag was a disinterested witness present, who heard all that Bath-sheba said to David.

16. Bath-sheba bowed, like the woman of Tekoah (2 Sam. xiv. 4), with the humble prostration of a suppliant. Hence the king's question, "What wouldest thou?"

20. *tell them who shall sit on the throne*] Side by side with what may be called the natural right of hereditary succession, there existed in the old world, and especially in the East, a right, if not of absolutely designating a successor, yet at any rate of choosing one among several sons. Thus Cyrus designated Cambyzes; and Darius designated Xerxes; and a still more absolute right of nomination was exercised by some of the Roman emperors.

21. *shall sleep*] This euphemism for death, rare in the early Scriptures,—being found only once in the Pentateuch (marg. ref.), and once also in the historical books before Kings (2 Sam. vii. 12),—becomes in

Kings and Chronicles the ordinary mode of speech (see ii. 10, xi. 43, &c.; 2 Chr. ix. 31, xii. 16, &c.). David uses the metaphor in one psalm (Ps. xiii. 3). In the later Scriptures it is, of course, common. (Jer. li. 39; Dan. xii. 2; Matt. ix. 24; John xi. 11; 1 Cor. xi. 30, xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 14, &c.)

22. Nathan came into the palace, not into the chamber, whither he might not enter unannounced. Bath-sheba retired before Nathan entered, in accordance with Oriental ideas of propriety. So, when Bath-sheba was again sent for (v. 28), Nathan retired (cp. v. 32).

24. *hast thou said*] Thou hast said. In the original no question is asked. Nathan assumes, as far as words go, that the king has made this declaration. He wishes to draw forth a disclaimer.

29. "As the Lord liveth" was the commonest form of oath among the Israelites (e.g. Judg. viii. 19; 1 Sam. xiv. 30, xix. 6).

- 30 my soul out of all distress, ^reven as I swear unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; ^r ver. 17.
- 31 even so will I certainly do this day. Then Bath-sheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and
- 32 said, ^rLet my lord king David live for ever. ¶ And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. ^r Neh. 2. 3. Dan. 2. 4.
- 33 The king also said unto them, ^rTake with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon ^rmine own ^r2 Sam. 20. 6.
- 34 mule, and bring him down to ^rGihon: and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet ^ranoint him there king over Israel: ^r2 Chr. 32. 30.
- and ^rblow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. ^r1 Sam. 10. 1. ch. 10. 10.
- 35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. ^r2 Kin. 9. 3. ^r2 Sam. 15. 10.
- 36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, ^r2 Kin. 9. 13. ^rJosh. 1. 5, 17.
- 37 Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so too. ^r1 Sam. 20. 13. ^rAs the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and ^rmake his throne greater than the throne of my ^rver. 47.
- 38 lord king David. ¶ So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, ^r2 Sam. 8. 18. & 23, 20-23.
- and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride ^rK. 30. 23. Ps. 89. 20.
- 39 upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok the priest took an horn of ^roil out of the tabernacle, and

¹ Heb. *which belongeth to me*: See Esth. 6. 8.

It was peculiar to David to attach a further clause to this oath—a clause of thankfulness for some special mercy (1 Sam. xxv. 34), or for God's constant protection of him (here and in 2 Sam. iv. 9).

31. A lower and humbler obeisance than before (v. 16). In the Assyrian sculptures ambassadors are represented with their faces actually touching the earth before the feet of the monarch.

32. The combination of the High-Priest, the Prophet, and the captain of the body-guard (the Cherethites and Pelethites, v. 38), would show the people that the proceedings had the king's sanction. The order of the names marks the position of the persons with respect to the matter in hand.

33. Mules and horses seem to have been first employed by the Israelites in the reign of David, and the use of the former was at first confined to great personages (2 Sam. xiii. 29, xviii. 9). The Rabbins tell us that it was death to ride on the king's mule without his permission; and thus it would be the more evident to all that the proceedings with respect to Solomon had David's sanction.

Gihon] Probably the ancient name of the valley called afterwards the Tyropœum, which ran from the present Damascus Gate, by Siloam, into the Kedron vale, having the Temple hill, or true Zion, on the left, and on the right the modern Zion or an-

cient city of the Jebusites. The upper "source" of the "waters of Gihon," which Hezekiah stopped (see marg. ref.), was probably in the neighbourhood of the Damascus Gate.

34. *anoint him*] Inauguration into each of the three offices [those of prophet, priest, and king] typical of the Messiah, or Anointed One, was by anointing with oil. Divine appointment had already instituted the rite in connexion with the kingly office (2 Sam. ii. 4); but after Solomon we have no express mention of the anointing of kings, except in the three cases of Jehu, Joash, and Jehoahaz (2 K. ix. 6, xi. 12, xxiii. 30), who were all appointed irregularly. At the time of the Captivity, kings, whose anointing has not been related in the historical books, still bear the title of "the anointed of the Lord." (Lam. iv. 20; Ps. lxxxix. 38, 51.)

35. *over Israel and over Judah*] There is no anticipation here of the subsequent division of the kingdom; the antithesis between Judah and Israel already existed in the reign of David (2 Sam. ii. 9, xix. 11).

37. *As the LORD hath been with my lord*] This phrase expresses a very high degree of Divine favour. It occurs first in the promises of God to Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 3, 24) and Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 13). See further marg. ref.

39. *the tabernacle*] Probably that which David had made for the Ark of the Covenant on Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi. 17). For

- ^d 1 Chr. 20.
22.
^c 1 Sam. 10.
24.
- ^d anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon. And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with 'pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.
- 41 ¶ And Adonijah and all the guests that *were* with him heard *it* as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore *is this* noise of the
- 42 city being in an uproar? And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for *'thou art* a valiant man, and
- 43 bringest good tidings. And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.
- 44 And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon
- 45 the king's mule: and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This *is* the noise
- 46 that ye have heard. And also Solomon *'sitteth* on the throne of the kingdom. And moreover the king's servants came to
- 47 bless our lord king David, saying, ^hGod make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. ⁱAnd the king bowed himself upon the bed.
- 48 And also thus said the king, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which hath ^kgiven *one* to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes
- 49 even seeing *it*. ¶ And all the guests that *were* with Adonijah
- 50 were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and
- 51 ^lcaught hold on the horns of the altar. And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant
- 52 with the sword. And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, ^mthere shall not an hair of him fall to the earth:
- 53 but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar.
- ⁿ 1 Sam. 14.
45.
2 Sam. 14. 11.
Acts 27. 34.

¹ Or, *futes*.

the holy oil, see marg. reff. That it was part of the regular furniture of the Tabernacle appears from Ex. xxxi. 11, xxxix. 38.

40. *pipied with pipes*] Some prefer "danced with dances"—a meaning which the Hebrew would give by a change in the pointing, and the alteration of one letter. But the change is unnecessary. (Flute-) pipes were known to the Israelites (1 Sam. x. 5); they were very ancient in Egypt, and were known also to the Assyrians.

the earth rent] If the present Hebrew text is correct we have here a strong instance of Oriental hyperbole. But it is suspected that there is a slight corruption, and that the verb really used meant "resounded."

42. Jonathan had acted in a similar capacity, as a carrier of intelligence, in the time of Absalom's attempt (2 Sam. xv. 36, xvii. 17); but at that time, like his father,

he was faithful to David, and "a valiant man," "a virtuous man," or "a man of worth." (See v. 52; Prov. xii. 4.)

43. *Verily*] "Nay, but" [or, "Not so"].
47. *the king bowed himself*] The king worshipped God and prayed that it might be so. Cp. Gen. xlvii. 31, with marg. ref., Heb. xi. 21.

50. On the "horns" of the Altar, see Ex. xxvii. 2 note. The Altar to which Adonijah fled was probably in the "Tabernacle" already referred to (r. 39).

52. *there shall not an hair, &c.*] This was a proverbial expression, meaning "he shall suffer no hurt at all." Solomon's clemency in pardoning Adonijah is very remarkable. In the East not only are pretenders almost always punished with death, but it has often been the custom for each king upon his accession to put to death all his brothers as mere possible pretenders.

And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

CHAP. 2. NOW ^athe days of David drew nigh that he should die; ^aand he charged Solomon his son, saying, ^bI go the way of all the earth: ^cbe thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; ^cand keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest ^dprosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: that the LORD may ^econtinue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, ^fIf thy children take heed to their way, to ^gwalk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, ^hthere shall not ⁱfail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel. Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah ^jdid to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto ^kAbner the son of Ner, and unto ^lAmasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and ^mshed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that ⁿwas about his loins, and in his shoes that ^owere on his feet. Do therefore ^paccording to thy wisdom, and let not

^a Gen. 47. 20.
^b Deut. 31. 14.
^c Josh. 23. 14.
^d Deut. 17. 19, 20.
^e Deut. 20. 6.
^f Josh. 1. 7.
^g 1 Chr. 22. 12, 13.
^h 2 Sam. 7. 25.
ⁱ 1st 132. 12.
^j 2 Kin. 20. 3.
^k 2 Sam. 7. 12, 13.
^l ch. 8. 25.
^m 2 Sam. 3. 30.
ⁿ & 19. 5, 6.
^o 2 Sam. 3. 27.
^p 2 Sam. 20. 10.
^q ver. 9.
Prov. 20. 26.

¹ Or, do wisely, 1 Sam. 18. 5, 14, 30.

² Heb. be cut off from thee from the throne.

³ Heb. put.

II. The events related in 1 Chr. xxviii. and xxix. had occurred in the interval which separates the last and this present chapter.

2. David appears to have in his thoughts the Divine address to Joshua. Without following it servilely, he reproduces several of its leading expressions and sentiments (cp. marg. ref.). Solomon's youth clearly constituted one of the chief difficulties of his position. If he was about nineteen or twenty, and known to be of a pacific disposition (1 Chr. xxii. 9), then to have to rule over the warlike and turbulent Hebrew nation, with a strong party opposed to him, and brothers of full age ready to lead it, was evidently a most difficult task. Hence he is exhorted, though in years a boy, to show himself in spirit "a man."

3. The "statutes" have been explained to be the positive ordinances of the Law; the "commandments" the moral precepts, not to steal, &c.; the "judgments" the laws belonging to civil government; and the "testimonies" the laws directing the commemoration of certain events. Cp. Ps. xix. 7, 8.

4. *that the LORD may continue his word*] The original promise given to David indirectly, through Nathan (2 Sam. vii. 11-17), and apparently unconditional, afterwards was made conditional upon continued obedience. (See marg. ref. f.) David reminds Solomon of this, in order to impress upon him a powerful motive to continue faithful and obedient.

5. In his directions with respect to certain important persons, David, anxious for the security of his young successor's king-

dom, allows old animosities to revive, and is willing to avenge himself indirectly and by deputy, though he had been withheld by certain scruples from taking vengeance in his own person. We must not expect Gospel morality from the saints of the Old Testament. They were only the best men of their several ages and nations. The maxim of "them of old time," whether Jews or Gentiles, was "Love your friends and hate your enemies" (see Matt. v. 43); and David perhaps was not in this respect in advance of his age. Joab's chief offence against David, besides his two murders, was no doubt his killing Absalom (2 Sam. xviii. 14). Another serious crime was his support of the treasonable attempt of Adonijah (i. 7). But besides these flagrant misdemeanours, he seems to have offended David by a number of little acts. He was a constant thorn in his side. He treated him with scant respect, taking important steps without his orders (2 Sam. iii. 26), remonstrating with him roughly and rudely (do. cv. 24 and 25), almost betraying his secrets (do. xi. 19-21), and, where he disliked the orders given him, disobeying them (1 Chr. xxi. 6). David allowed his ascendancy, but he chafed against it, finding this "son of Zeruiah," in particular "too hard" for him (marg. ref.).

put the blood of war upon his girdle, &c.] Meaning "The blood of Amasa spirted all over the girdle to which the sword of Joab was attached; and the sandals on his feet were reddened with the stains left by the falling corpse."

6. *his hair head*] Joab, though the nephew of David, was probably not very

* 2 Sam. 19.
31, 38.
* 2 Sam. 9.
7, 10.
& 19. 23.
* 2 Sam. 17.
27.
* 2 Sam. 16. 5.
* 2 Sam. 10.
18.
* 2 Sam. 19.
23.
* Ex. 20. 7.
Joh 9. 23.
* Gen. 42.
38.
& 44. 31.
* ch. 1. 21.
Acts 2. 29.
& 13. 36.
* 2 Sam. 5. 7.
* 2 Sam. 5. 4.
1 Chr. 20. 26.
27.
* 1 Chr. 20. 23.
2 Chr. 1. 1.
* 1 Sam. 16.
4, 5.
* ch. 1. 5.
* 1 Chr. 22. 9.
10.
& 28. 5-7.
Prov. 21. 30.
Dan. 2. 21.
* ch. 1. 3, 4.

f Ex. 20. 12.
* See Ps. 45.
9.

7 his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. But shew kindness unto the sons of ^aBarzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that ^eeat at thy table: for so ^bthey came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. And, behold, *thou hast* with thee ^cShimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a ^dgrievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but ^ehe came down to meet me at Jordan, and ^fI sware to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. Now therefore ^ghold him not guiltless: for thou *art* a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head ^hbring thou down to the grave with blood. ¶ So ⁱDavid slept with his fathers, and was buried in ^jthe city of David. And the days that David ^kreigned over Israel *were* forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. ¶ ^lThen sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly. ¶ And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, ^mComest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably. He said moreover, ⁿI have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on. And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was ^omine, and *that* all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for ^pit was his from the LORD. And now I ask one petition of thee, ^qdeny me not. And she said unto him, Say on. And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me ^rAbishag the Shunammite to wife. And Bath-sheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king. ¶ Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and ^sbowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; ^tand she sat on his right hand. Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; *I pray thee*, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay. And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask

¹ Heb. *strong*.

² Heb. *turn not away my face*, Ps. 132. 10.

greatly his junior, David being the youngest of the family, and Zeruiah, as is most likely, one of the eldest.

7. One of the sons of Barzillai here intended was probably Chimham (see marg. ref.). Who the others were is not known. The family continued down to the return from the Captivity, and still held property in Israel (cp. Ezra ii. 61 and Nehemiah vii. 63).

9. *hold him not guiltless*] i.e. "Do not treat him as an innocent man. Punish him as in thy wisdom thou deemest best. Not capitally at once; but so that he may be likely to give thee in course of time a just occasion to slay him." So, at least, Solomon seems to have understood the charge. (See *vv.* 36-46.)

11. *forty years*] In all forty years and

six months. See 2 Sam. v. 5, and 1 Chr. iii. 4. The Jewish writers almost universally omit the fractions of a year.

12. The "establishment" of the kingdom here intended is probably its universal acceptance both by the tribe of Judah and the other Israelites.

16. *deny me not*] Lit., as in the margin, i.e. "make me not to hide my face through shame at being refused."

19. *a seat*] Or, "a throne." We have here a proof of the high dignity of the Queen-mother. Cp. also xv. 13; 2 K. xi. 1-3. In the Persian Court the Queen-mother had often the chief power.

22. *ask for him the kingdom also*] Bath-sheba had not seen anything dangerous or suspicious in Adonijah's request. Solomon, on the contrary, takes alarm at once. To

- for him the kingdom also; for he *is* mine elder brother; even for him, and for ^aAbiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of ^ach. 1. 7.
 23 Zeruiah. ¶ Then king Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, 'God ^aRuth 1. 17.
 do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this
 24 word against his own life. Now therefore, *as* the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he ^apromised, ^a2 Sam. 7.
 25 Adonijah shall be put to death this day. And king Solomon 11, 13.
 sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell 1 Chr. 22. 10.
 26 upon him that he died. ¶ And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to ^aAnathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art ^aJosh. 21. 18.
 'worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, ^abecause thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David my father, and because ^athou hast been afflicted in all wherein my ^a1 Sam. 23. 6.
 27 father was afflicted. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from 2 Sam. 15. 24, 29.
 being priest unto the LORD; that he might ^afulfil the word of ^a1 Sam. 22. 20, 23.
 the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh. ^a1 Sam. 2. 31-35.
 28 ¶ Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab ^ahad turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto ^ach. 1. 7.
 the tabernacle of the LORD, and ^acaught hold on the horns of ^ach. 1. 50.
 29 the altar. And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, *he is* by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go,
 30 fall upon him. And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered
 31 me. And the king said unto him, ^aDo as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; ^athat thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house

^a Heb. *a man of death*.

ask for Abishag was to ask for the kingdom. To the Oriental mind a monarch was so sacred, that whatever was brought near to him was thenceforth separate from common use. This sacred and separate character attached especially to the Royal harem. The inmates either remained widows for the rest of their lives, or became the wives of the deceased king's successor. When a monarch was murdered, or dethroned, or succeeded by one whose title was doubtful, the latter alternative was almost always adopted (cp. 2 Sam. xii. 8, xvi. 22). Public opinion so closely connected the title to the crown and the possession of the deceased monarch's wives, that to have granted Adonijah's request would have been the strongest encouragement to his pretensions. Solomon, seeing this, assumes that Adonijah cherishes a guilty purpose, that there has been a fresh plot, that Abiathar and Joab—Adonijah's counsellors in the former conspiracy (i. 7)—are privy to it, and that the severest measures are necessary to crush the new treason.

23. *against his own life*] Adonijah had forfeited his life by his former conduct, and his pardon had been merely conditional (i. 52).

24. The phrase "making a house" means "continuing the posterity" of a person, and, in the case of a royal person, "maintaining his descendants upon the throne."

26. For Anathoth and the allusions in this verse, see marg. ref.

27. *that he might fulfil the word of the LORD*] We need not understand this as stating that the fulfilment of the old prophecy was Solomon's motive, or even one of his motives. The reference is to the overruling providence of God, which thus brought about the fulfilment of the prophecy. (Cp. Matt. i. 22, ii. 15, xxvii. 35, &c.) The deposition of Abiathar involved the rejection of the house of Ithamar (1 Chr. xxiv. 3), to which Eli belonged, and the re-establishment of the High-Priesthood in the line of Eleazar.

28. Joab followed the example of Adonijah (marg. ref.). The Tabernacle was now at Gibeon (iii. 4; 1 Chr. xvi. 39).

31. It was only a murderer to whom the Tabernacle was to be no protection (marg. ref.). Hence the reference to the "innocent blood."

† Judg. 9.
21, 57.
Ps. 7, 16.
* 2 Chr. 21, 13.
* 2 Sam. 3, 27.
† 2 Sam. 20.
10.
* 2 Sam. 3, 29.
* Prov. 25, 5.

† Num. 25.
11, 12, 13.
1 Sam. 2, 35.
See 1 Chr. 6.
53.
* 21, 3.
* ver. 27.
† 2 Sam. 16, 5.
ver. 8.
* 3 Sam. 15.
23.
† Lev. 20, 9.
Josh. 2, 19.
2 Sam. 1, 16.
† 1 Sam.
27, 2.

† 2 Sam.
16, 5.

† Ps. 7, 16.
Ezek. 17, 19.
* 2 Sam. 7.
13. Ps. 89, 4.

† ver. 12.
2 Chr. 1, 1.

32 of my father. And the LORD 'shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous "and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing *thereof, to wit*, *Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and †Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the 33 host of Judah. Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and *upon the head of his seed for ever: "but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon 34 his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD. So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. 35 And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and †Zadok the priest did the king put in the room 36 of †Abiathar. ¶ And the king sent and called for "Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell 37 there, and go not forth thence any whither. For it shall be, *that* on the day thou goest out, and passest over 'the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: 38 †thy blood shall be upon thine own head. And Shimei said unto the king, The saying *is* good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. 39 And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto †Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants *be* 40 in Gath. And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and 41 brought his servants from Gath. And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again. 42 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou 43 saidst unto me, The word *that* I have heard *is* good. Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment 44 that I have charged thee with? The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest †all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD 45 shall 'return thy wickedness upon thine own head; and king Solomon *shall be* blessed, and †the throne of David shall be es- 46 tablished before the LORD for ever. So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the 'kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

32. *shall return his blood*] i.e. "his shedding of blood."

33. *upon the head of his seed*] Cp. marg. ref. Nothing further is heard of Joab's descendants in the history.

34. Retribution overtook Joab on the very scene (Gibeon) of the most treacherous of his murders. It was at the "great stone which is in Gibeon" that Joab slew Amasa (2 Sam. xx. 8-10).

35. The High-Priesthood had been for some time in a certain sense divided between Zadok and Abiathar. (See i. 8 note). Henceforth Zadok became sole High-Priest.

36. The object, apparently, was to keep

Shimei under the immediate eye of the government. Shimei's old home, Bahurim, lay east of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho (2 Sam. xvii. 18), and could only be reached by crossing the Kedron valley. Solomon assumes, that, if he quits the city, it will probably be in this direction (r. 37).

39. *Achish*] Possibly the Achish of marg. ref., but more probably the grandson of the former Achish.

42. *Did I not make thee to swear*] The LXX. add to r. 37 a clause stating that Solomon "made Shimei swear" on the day when he commanded him to reside at Jerusalem.

CHAP. 3. AND "Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the ^bcity of David, until he had made an end of building his ^cown house, and ^dthe house of the LORD, and ^ethe wall of Jerusalem round about. ^fOnly the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days. 3 And Solomon ^gloved the LORD, ^hwalking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. 4 ¶ And ⁱthe king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; ^kfor that ^lwas the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. ^mIn Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon ⁿin a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. ^oAnd Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great ^pmercy, according as he ^qwalked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness,

¹ Or, bounty.

^a ch. 7. 8.
^b 9. 24.
^c 2 Sam. 5. 7.
^d ch. 7. 1.
^e ch. 6.
^f ch. 9. 15.
^g Lev. 17. 3.
^h ch. 22. 43.
ⁱ Deut. 6. 5.
^j 30. 16.
^k Ps. 31. 23.
^l Rom. 8. 28.
^m 1 Cor. 8. 3.
ⁿ ver. 6. 14.
^o 2 Chr. 1. 3.
^p 1 Chr. 16. 39.
^q ch. 9. 2.
^r 2 Chr. 1. 7.
^s Num. 12. 6.
^t Matt. 1. 20.
^u 2 Chr. 1.
^v 8. &c.
^w ch. 2. 4.
^x Ps. 15. 2.

III. 1. What Pharaoh is meant is uncertain. It must have been a predecessor of Shishak (or Sheshonk), who invaded Judæa more than forty years later (xiv. 25); and probabilities are in favour, not of Psusennes II., the last king of Manetho's 21st dynasty, but of Psinaces, the predecessor of Psusennes. This, the Tanite dynasty, had become very weak, especially towards its close, whence we may conceive how gladly it would ally itself with the powerful house of David. The Jews were not forbidden to marry foreign wives, if they became proselytes. As Solomon is not blamed for this marriage either here or in ch. xi., and as the idol temples which he allowed to be built (xi. 5-7) were in no case dedicated to Egyptian deities, it is to be presumed that his Egyptian wife adopted her husband's religion.

the city of David] The city, situated on the eastern hill, or true Zion, where the Temple was afterwards built, over against the city of the Jebusites (ix. 24; cp. 2 Chr. viii. 11).

2. The word "only" introduces a contrast. The writer means to say that there was one exception to the flourishing condition of things which he has been describing, viz., that "the people sacrificed in high-places." (Compare the next verse.) The Law did not forbid "high-places" directly, but only by implication. It required the utter destruction of all the high-places which had been polluted by idolatrous rites (Deut. xii. 2); and the injunction to offer sacrifices nowhere except at the door of the Tabernacle (Lev. xvii. 3-5) was an indirect prohibition of them, or, at least, of the use which the Israelites made of them; but there was some real reason to question whether this was a command intended to come into force until the "place" was chosen "where the Lord would cause His name to dwell." (See Deut. xii. 11, 14.) The result was that high-places were used for the wor-

ship of Jehovah, from the time of the Judges downwards (Judg. vi. 25, xiii. 16; 1 Sam. vii. 10, xiii. 9, xiv. 35, xvi. 5; 1 Chr. xxi. 26), with an entire unconsciousness of guilt on the part of those who used them. And God so far overlooked this ignorance that He accepted the worship thus offered Him, as appears from the vision vouchsafed to Solomon on this occasion. There were two reasons for the prohibition of high-places; first, the danger of the old idolatry creeping back if the old localities were retained for worship; and, secondly, the danger to the unity of the nation if there should be more than one legitimate religious centre. The existence of the worship at high-places did, in fact, facilitate the division of the kingdom.

4. *Gibeon*] The transfer to Gibeon of the "Tabernacle of the congregation," and the brazen "Altar of burnt offerings" made by Moses, which were removed thither from Nob (cp. 1 Sam. xxi. 6, with marg. ref. i, k), had made it "the great high-place," more sacred, i.e., than any other in the Holy Land, unless it were Mount Zion whither the Ark had been conveyed by David. For the position of Gibeon, see Josh. ix. 3 note.

a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer] Solomon presented the victims. The priests were the actual sacrificers (viii. 5). A sacrifice of a thousand victims was an act of royal magnificence suited to the greatness of Solomon. So Xerxes offered 1000 oxen at Troy. If the offerings in this case were "whole burnt offerings," and were all offered upon the Altar of Moses, the sacrifice must have lasted several days.

5. *the LORD appeared unto Solomon in a dream*] Cp. marg. ref. and Gen. xv. 1, xxviii. 12, xxxvii. 5.

6. *this great kindness*] David himself had regarded this as God's crowning mercy to him (i. 48).

ch. 1. 49.

1 Chr. 29. 1.

Num. 27. 17.

Deut. 7. 6.

Gen. 13. 16.

15. 5.

2 Chr. 1. 10.

Pro. 2. 3-9.

Jam. 1. 5.

Ps. 72. 1.

Heb. 5. 14.

Jam. 4. 3.

1 John 5.

14. 15.

ch. 5. 12.

10. 24.

Eccles. 1. 16.

Matt. 6. 33.

Eph. 3. 20.

ch. 4. 21, 24.

Prov. 3. 16.

ch. 15. 5.

Ps. 91. 16.

Prov. 3. 2.

So Gen.

41. 7.

that thou ¹hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this
7 day. And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant
king instead of David my father: ²and I *am but* a little child:
8 I know not *how* ³to go out or come in. And thy servant *is* in
the midst of thy people which thou ⁴hast chosen, a great people,
9 ⁵that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. "Give
therefore thy servant an ⁶understanding heart ⁷to judge thy
people, that I may ⁸discern between good and bad: for who is
10 able to judge this thy so great a people? ¶ And the speech
11 pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God
said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast ⁹not
asked for thyself ¹⁰long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself,
nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thy-
12 self understanding ¹¹to discern judgment; ¹²behold, I have done
according to thy words: ¹³lo, I have given thee a wise and an un-
derstanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee,
13 neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have
also ¹⁴given thee that which thou hast not asked, both ¹⁵riches,
and honour: so that there ¹⁶shall not be any among the kings
14 like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways,
to keep my statutes and my commandments, ¹⁷as thy father
15 David did walk, then I will ¹⁸lengthen thy days. And Solomon
¹⁹awoke; and, behold, *it was* a dream. And he came to Jeru-
salem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD,
and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and

¹ Heb. *hearing*.

² Heb. *many days*.

³ Heb. *to hear*.

⁴ Or, *hath not been*.

7. See ii. 2 note, and on the hyperbole contained in the phrase "little child," cp. Gen. xliii. 8; Ex. xxxiii. 11.

how to go out or come in] This expression is proverbial for the active conduct of affairs. (See marg. ref.)

8. Cp. marg. ref. Solomon regards the promises as fulfilled in the existing greatness and glory of the Jewish nation.

9. One of the chief functions of the Oriental monarch is always to hear and decide causes. Hence supreme magistrates were naturally called "judges." (See Introd. to Book of Judges.) In the minds of the Jews the "judge" and the "prince" were always closely associated, the direct cognisance of causes being constantly taken by their chief civil governors. (See Ex. ii. 14, xviii. 16, 22; 1 Sam. viii. 20; 2 Sam. xv. 2-6.)

good and bad] i.e. "right and wrong," "justice and injustice."

10. Although Solomon's choice was made "in a dream" (v. 5), we must regard it as springing from his will in some degree, and therefore as indicative of his moral character.

11. *thine enemies*] e.g. Hadad the Edomite (xi. 14-22) and Rezon the son of Eliadah (do. vv. 23-25), whom Solomon might well have wished to remove.

12. *a wise and an understanding heart*] Solomon's wisdom seems to have been both moral and intellectual (see iv. 29-34). But

it was moral wisdom alone which he requested, and which was promised him. The terms translated "wise" and "understanding," both denote *practical* wisdom. (See Gen. xli. 33, 39; Deut. iv. 6; Prov. i. 2, &c.)

neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee] i.e. in the knowledge of what was in man, and in the wisdom to direct men's goings, he was to be the wisest of all mere men. In such wisdom the world would know one only "greater than Solomon" (Matt. xii. 42; Luke xi. 31).

13. A striking illustration of that law of the Divine government to which Christ referred (marg. ref.).

14. *I will lengthen thy days*] The promise here was only conditional. As the condition was not observed (xi. 1-8), the right to the promise was forfeited, and it was not fulfilled. Solomon can scarcely have been more than fifty-nine or sixty at his death.

15. Solomon determined to inaugurate his reign by a grand religious ceremonial at each of the two holy places which at this time divided between them the reverence of the Jews. Having completed the religious service at Gibeon, where was the Tabernacle of the Congregation, he proceeded to Jerusalem, and sacrificed before the Ark of the Covenant, which was in Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi. 12). A great feast naturally followed on a large sacrifice of peace-offerings. In these the sacrificer

- 16 ^amade a feast to all his servants. ¶ Then came there two women, *that were* harlots, unto the king, and ^astood before him.
 17 And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.
 18 And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we *were* together; *there was* no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.
 19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid 21 her dead child in my bosom. And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did 22 bear. And the other woman said, Nay; but the living *is* my son, and the dead *is* thy son. And this said, No; but the dead *is* thy son, and the living *is* my son. Thus they spake before the king.
 23 ¶ Then said the king, The one saith, This *is* my son that liveth, and thy son *is* the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son 24 *is* the dead, and my son *is* the living. And the king said, Bring 25 me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the 26 one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child *was* unto the king, for ^aher bowels ^byearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine 27 nor thine, *but divide it*. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she *is* the mother 28 thereof. And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the 4 ^cwisdom of God *was* ^din him, to do judgment. SO king Solomon was king over all Israel. ¶ And these *were* the princes 3 which he had, Azariah the son of Zadok ^ethe priest, Elihoreph and Abiah, the sons of Shisha, ^fscribes; ^gJehoshaphat the son

^a So Gen 40. 20.
 ch. 8. 05.
 Esth. 1. 3.
 Dan. 5. 1.
 Mark 6. 21.
 Num. 27. 2.

^h Gen. 43. 30.
 Isai. 40. 15.
 Luke 1. 7, 8.
 2 Cor. 7. 15

ⁱ ver. 9, 11, 12.

^a 2Sam. 8. 16. & 20. 24.

¹ Heb. *were hot*.

² Heb. *in the midst of him*.

³ Or, *the chief officer*.

⁴ Or, *secretaries*.

always partook of the flesh of the victim, and he was commanded to call in to the feast the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (Deut. xiv. 29). Cp. 2 Sam. vi. 19; 1 Chr. xvi. 3.

28. *the wisdom of God*] i.e. "Divine wisdom," "a wisdom given by God" (v. 12). The ready tact and knowledge of human nature exhibited in this pattern judgment, and its peculiar fitness to impress Orientals, have generally been admitted.

IV. 1. Solomon, that is, was king over "all Israel" from the first; not like David, who for seven and a half years reigned over Judah only. This feature well introduces the glory of Solomon and the organisation of the Court, of which the historian in this chapter intends to give us a general sketch. Solomon constitutes certain "princes" or officers of the first rank, deriving their station from him, and probably holding it during pleasure.

Azariah, the son of Zadok, the priest] "The priest" here belongs to Azariah, not

to Zadok. The term used (*cohen*) means sometimes a priest, sometimes a civil officer, with perhaps a semi-priestly character. (See 2 Sam. viii. 18 note.) In this place it has the definite article prefixed, and can only mean "the High-Priest." Azariah, called here the *son*, but really the *grandson*, of Zadok, seems to have succeeded him in the priesthood (1 Chr. vi. 10). His position as High-Priest at the time when this list was made out gives Azariah the foremost place in it.

3. Shisha, or Shavsha (1 Chr. xviii. 16), seems also to have been called Sheva (2 Sam. xx. 25), and Seraiah (2 Sam. viii. 17).

The "scribes" were probably royal "secretaries" (marg.), who drew up the king's edicts, wrote his letters, and perhaps managed his finances (xii. 10). They were among his most influential councillors.

By "recorder" or "remembrancer" (marg.), we must understand "Court analyst" (marg. ref. a).

b ch. 2. 35.
 c See ch. 2. 27.
 d ver. 7.
 e 2 Sam. 8. 18.
 f 20. 26.
 g 2 Sam. 15.
 37.
 h 16. 16.
 i Chr. 27. 33.
 j ch. 5. 14.

k Num. 32.
 41.

4 of Ahilud, the ¹recorder. And ^bBenaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok and ^cAbiathar were the priests: 5 and Azariah the son of Nathan was over ^dthe officers: and Zabad the son of Nathan was ^eprincipal officer, and ^fthe king's friend: and Ahishar was over the household: and ^gAdoniram 7 the son of Abda was over the ²tribute. ¶ And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made 8 provision. And these are their names: ³The son of Hur, in 9 mount Ephraim: ⁴the son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, 10 and Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan: ⁵the son of Heshed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hephher: 11 ⁶the son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had 12 Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife; Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam: 13 ⁷the son of Geber, in Ramoth-gilead; to him pertained ^hthe towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him

¹ Or, remembrancer.

² Or, levy.

³ Or, Ben-hur.

⁴ Or, Ben-dekar.

⁵ Or, Ben-hesed.

⁶ Or, Ben-abinadab.

⁷ Or, Ben-geber.

4. It is curious to find Abiathar in this list of princes, after what has been said of his disgrace (ii. 27, 35). Some have supposed that after a while Solomon pardoned him. Perhaps the true explanation is that the historian here enumerates all those who were accounted "princes" in any part of Solomon's reign.

5. *the son of Nathan*] It is uncertain whether the Nathan of this verse is the Prophet or the son of David (2 Sam. v. 14). While on the one hand the position of "king's friend" is more likely to have been held by a contemporary, which the Prophet's son would have been, than by one so much younger as the son of a younger brother; on the other hand the title *cohen* seems to point to a member of the royal family. (See the next note.) Azariah who was "over the officers" was chief, that is, of the "officers" mentioned in vv. 8-19, as appears from the identity of the term here used with the title by which they are designated in v. 7.

principal officer] Or, *cohen*. The fact that the title *cohen* was borne by sons of David (2 Sam. viii. 18), who could not be priests in the ordinary sense of the word, seems to identify the Nathan of this verse with David's son (2 Sam. v. 14) rather than with the Prophet.

6. *over the household*] Comptroller of the household, like the "Steward" of the Persian Court. On the importance of this office, see 2 K. xviii. 18, and cp. Is. xxii. 15-25.

the tribute] The marginal reading, "levy," is preferable. The reference is to the forced labourers whom Solomon employed in his great works (marg. ref.).

7. The requirement of a portion of their produce from subjects, in addition to money payments, is a common practice of Oriental monarchs. It obtained in ancient, and it still obtains in modern, Persia.

8. In this arrangement of the territory into twelve portions, the divisions of the tribes seem to have been adopted as far as could be managed without unfairness. The prefecture of Ben-Hur corresponded nearly to the territory of Ephraim; that of Ben-Dekar to Dan; that of Ben-Hesed to Judah; those of Ben-Abinadab and Baana to Cis-Jordanic Manasseh; that of Ben-Geber to Manasseh beyond Jordan; of Abinadab to Gad; of Ahimaaz to Naphthali; of Baanah to Asher; of Jehoshaphat to Issachar; of Shimei to Benjamin; and of Geber to Reuben. The order in which the prefectures are mentioned is clearly not the geographical. Perhaps it is the order in which they had to supply the king's table.

9. For some of the names, see Josh. xix. 41-43.

10. *Sochoh*] See Josh. xv. 35.

11. *Dor*] See Josh. xi. 2 note. It has always been a practice among Oriental potentates to attach to themselves the more important of their officers by giving them for wives princesses of the royal house. Hence the union here between Ben-Abinadab (probably Solomon's first cousin, cp. 1 Sam. xvi. 8) and Taphath. Cp. v. 15.

12. On these cities see Josh. xii. 21, iii. 16; Judg. vii. 22; Josh. xxi. 22.

13. It will be observed that five out of the twelve prefects are designated solely by their father's names, Ben-Hur, &c., while one (Ahimaaz, v. 15) has no such designa-

also pertained ¹the region of Argob, which *is* in Bashan, three-
 14 score great cities with walls and brasen bars: Ahinadab the son
 15 of Iddo had ¹Mahanaim: Ahinnaaz was in Naphtali; he also
 16 took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife: Baanah the son
 17 of Hushai was in Asher and in Aloth: Jehoshaphat the son of
 18 Paruah, in Issachar: Shimci the son of Elah, in Benjamin:
 19 Geber the son of Uri was in the country of Gilead, *in* ²the ³Deut. 3. 8.
 country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of
 Bashan; and he was the only officer which was in the land.
 20 ¶ Judah and Israel were many, ¹as the sand which *is* by the sea ¹Gen. 22. 17.
 21 in multitude, ²eating and drinking, and making merry. And ²Prov. 11. 24.
 "Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from ³the river unto the ³Ps. 72. 3.
 land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: ⁴they ⁴2 Chr. 9. 26.
 brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. ⁵Ps. 72. 8.
 22 ¶ And Solomon's ⁶provision for one day was thirty ⁶measures ⁶Gen. 15. 18.
 23 of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and ⁷Josh. 1. 1.
 twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside ⁸Ps. 68. 29.
 24 harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl. For he
 had dominion over all the region on this side the river: from

¹ Or, to Mahanaim.² Heb. bread.³ Heb. cors.

tion. Probably the document, which the author of the Book of Kings consulted, had contained originally the proper name and father's name of each prefect; but it was mutilated or illegible in places at the time when he consulted it. If *it* was in the shape of a list, a single mutilation at one corner might have removed four of the six wanting names.

14. See margin. Ahinadab had the territory from the places last mentioned as far as Mahanaim (Gen. xxxii. 2).

19. The meaning of the last clause is somewhat doubtful. On the whole, our Version may well stand as nearly correct. The writer has assigned to Geber a wide stretch of territory; and, anticipating surprise, assures his readers "(there was but) one officer who (purveyed) in this land."

20. There is some doubt about the proper arrangement of the remainder of this chapter. The best alteration, if we alter the Hebrew order at all, would be to place vv. 20 and 21 after v. 25.

many, &c.] See iii. 8 note; and cp. Ps. cxxvii., which is traditionally ascribed to Solomon, and which celebrates the populousness and security of Israel in his day.

21. Solomon's empire, like all the great empires of Asia down to the time of the Persians, consisted of a congeries of small kingdoms, all ruled by their own kings (c. 24), who admitted the suzerainty of the Jewish monarch, and paid him "presents," i.e. an annual tribute (see x. 25).

unto the land of the Philistines] There is no word corresponding to "unto" in the Hebrew. The construction should be, "Solomon reigned over all the kingdoms from the river (i.e. the Euphrates: see marg. reff.), or: the land of the Philistines,"

&c. The writer draws attention to the fact that the extent of Solomon's kingdom was in accordance with the promises made to Abraham, Moses, and Joshua.

22. thirty measures] (marg. cors) The cor, which was the same measure as the homer, is computed, on the authority of Josephus, at 86 English gallons, on the authority of the Rabbinical writers at 44. Thirty cors, even at the lower estimate, would equal 1,320 gallons, or 33 of our "sacks;" and the 90 cors of fine and coarse flour would altogether equal 99 sacks. From the quantity of flour consumed, it has been conjectured that the number of those who fed at the royal board was 14,000.

23. harts, &c.] The exact sorts of wild land animals here intended are very uncertain. Perhaps it would be best to translate "wild-goats, gazelles, and wild oxen," which abounded in the wilder parts of Syria, whence Solomon would be supplied. (See v. 24.) [Yahntur, or the "roebuck," gives its name to a valley in a wooded district, south of Carmel (Conder).] The use of game at the royal banquets of Assyria appears in the sculptures.

24. on this side the river] i.e. the region west of the Euphrates.

Tiphshah, or Tiphshah, the place on the Euphrates called Thapsacus. The word means "ford," or "passage," being formed from *pasach*, "to pass over" (cp. "paschal"). It is the modern *Surigh*, forty-five miles below Balis, at the point where the Euphrates changes its course from S. to S.E. by E. The stream is fordable here, and nowhere else in this part of its course. Solomon's possession of Thapsacus would have been very favourable to his schemes of land commerce (ix. 19).

* Ps. 72. 11.
 * 1 Chr. 22. 9.
 * See Jer. 23. 6
 * Mic. 4. 4.
 Zech. 3. 10.
 * Judg. 20. 1.
 * ch. 10. 20.
 2 Chr. 1. 14.
 * See Deut.
 17. 16.
 * ver. 7.
 * ch. 3. 12.
 * Gen. 25. 6.
 * See Acts 7.
 22.
 * ch. 3. 12.
 * 1 Chr. 15. 19.
 Ps. 89. title.
 * See 1 Chr.
 2. 6.
 & 6. 33.
 & 15. 19.
 Ps. 88.
 title.
 * Prov. 1. 1.
 Eccles. 12. 9.
 * Cant. 1. 1.

Tiphshah even to Azzah, over ^aall the kings on this side the river:
 25 and ^bhe had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah
 and Israel ^cdwelt ^dsafely, ^eevery man under his vine and under
 his fig tree, ^ffrom Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solo-
 26 mon. ¶ And ^gSolomon had forty thousand stalls of ^hhorses for
 27 his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. And ⁱthose officers
 provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto
 king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked no-
 28 thing. Barley also and straw for the horses and ^jdromedaries
 brought they unto the place where ^kthe officers were, every man
 according to his charge. ¶ And ^lGod gave Solomon wisdom and
 understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as
 30 the sand that ^mis on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom ex-
 celled the wisdom of all the children ⁿof the east country, and
 31 all ^othe wisdom of Egypt. For he was ^pwiser than all men;
^qthan Ethan the Ezrahite, ^rand Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda,
 the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.
 32 And ^she spake three thousand proverbs: and his ^tsongs were a

¹ Heb. *confidently*.

² Or, *mules, or, swift beasts*, Esth. 8. 14. Mic. 1. 13.

to Azzah] i.e. Gaza.
 all the kings] Cp. Josh. xii. 9-24. In
 Philistia, small as it was, there were five
 kings (1 Sam. vi. 18). Syria was divided
 into numerous small states, as many as
 thirty-two kings being mentioned on one
 occasion (xx. 1). The Hittites were ruled
 by a great number of chieftains or princes
 (x. 29; 2 K. vii. 6). Twelve are mentioned
 in the Assyrian inscriptions.

25. *under his vine, &c.*] This phrase seems
 to have been common among the Jews, and
 even among neighbouring nations (2 K.
 xviii. 31), to express a time of quiet and
 security. It is used by the prophets in
 descriptions of the Messianic kingdom
 (marg. ref.).

26. In 2 Chr. ix. 25, the number of stalls
 for Solomon's chariot horses is stated at
 4,000, instead of 40,000. The number in
 the present passage is probably a corrup-
 tion. Solomon's chariots were but 1,400
 (x. 26; 2 Chr. i. 14), for which 40,000 horses
 could not possibly be required. The Assyrian
 chariots had at most three horses apiece,
 while some had only two. 4,000 horses
 would supply the full team of three to 1,200,
 and the smaller team of two to 200 chariots.
 The number 4,000 is in due proportion to
 the 12,000 horses for cavalry, and is in
 accordance with all that we know of the
 military establishments of the time and
 country. Cp. 2 Chr. xii. 3; 2 Sam. viii. 4.

28. Barley is to this day in the East the
 common food of horses.

dromedaries] Coursers. The animal in-
 tended is neither a camel nor a mule, but a
 swift horse.

the place where the officers were] Rather,
 "places where the horses and coursers
 were," i.e. to the different cities where they
 were lodged.

29. *largeness of heart*] What we call

"great capacity." The expression which
 follows is common in reference to nu-
 merical multitude (v. 20), but its use here
 to express mere amplitude or greatness is
 peculiar.

30. *children of the east country*] Rather,
 "of the East"—the *Beni Kedem*—a dis-
 tinct tribe, who occupied both sides of the
 Euphrates along its middle course (marg.
 ref.). They were mostly nomads, who
 dwelt in tents (Jer. xlix. 28, 29). Job be-
 longed to them (Job i. 3), as did probably
 his three friends; and, perhaps, Balaam
 (Num. xxiii. 7). They must have been
 either Arabs or Arameans. We may see
 in the Book of Job the character of their
 "wisdom." Like Solomon's, it was chiefly
 gnomic but included some knowledge of
 natural history. The "wisdom of Egypt"
 was of a different kind. It included magic
 (Gen. xli. 8; Ex. vii. 11), geometry, medi-
 cine, astronomy, architecture, and a dreamy
 mystic philosophy, of which metempsy-
 chosis was the main principle. It is not
 probable that Solomon was, like Moses
 (marg. ref.), deeply versed in Egyptian
 science. The writer only means to say that
 his wisdom was truer and more real than
 all the much-praised wisdom of Egypt.

31. It is most probable that the persons
 with whom Solomon is compared were con-
 temporaries, men noted for "wisdom,"
 though there is no other mention of them.

his fame was in all nations] See below,
 ch. x.

32. *proverbs*] In the collection which
 forms the "Book of Proverbs," only a
 small portion has been preserved, less cer-
 tainly than one thousand out of the three.
 Ecclesiastes, if it be Solomon's, would add
 between one and two hundred. But the
 great bulk of Solomon's proverbs has
 perished.

33 thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

CHAP. 5. AND ^aHiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the 2 room of his father: ^bfor Hiram was ever a lover of David. And 3 ^cSolomon sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God ^dfor the wars which were about him on every side, until 4 the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD my God hath given me ^erest on every side, so that there is 5 neither adversary nor evil occurrent. ^fAnd, behold, I ^gpurpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, ^has the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house 6 unto my name. Now therefore command thou that they hew me ⁱcedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt ^jappoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto

ⁱ ch. 10. 1.
^j 2 Chr. 9.
1, 23.

^a 2 Chr. 2, 3.
Hiram.

^b 2Sam. 5. 11.
1 Chr. 14. 1
^c 2 Chr. 2, 3.

^d 1 Chr. 22. 8.
^e 28. 3.

^f ch. 4. 24.
1 Chr. 22. 9.
^g 2 Chr. 2. 4.
^h 2Sam. 7. 13.
1 Chr. 17. 12.
ⁱ 22. 10.

^j 2 Chr. 2.
8, 10.

¹ Heb. say.

² Heb. say.

songs] Of these, Canticles is probably one (marg. ref.): Pss. lxxii. and cxvii. may also be of the number. Probably the bulk of Solomon's songs were of a secular character, and consequently were not introduced into the Canon of Scripture.

33. *trees, &c.*] A keen appreciation of the beauties of nature, and a habit of minute observation, are apparent in the writings of Solomon that remain to us. The writer here means to say that Solomon composed special works on these subjects. The Lebanon cedars were the most magnificent of all the trees known to the Hebrews, and hence represent in the Old Testament the grandest of vegetable productions. (Ps. civ. 16; Cant. v. 15; Ezek. xxxi. 3, &c.) For the hyssop, see Ex. xii. 22 note.

of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes] This is the usual Biblical division of the animal kingdom (Gen. i. 26, ix. 2; Ps. cxlviii. 10).

V. 1. *Hiram, king of Tyre*] Menander of Ephesus, who wrote a history of Tyre in Greek, founded upon native Tyrian documents, about B.C. 300, mentioned this Hiram as the son of Abibaal king of Tyre, and said that he ascended the throne when he was nineteen; that he reigned thirty-four years, and, dying at the age of fifty-three, was succeeded by his son Balear. Menander spoke at some length of the dealings of Hiram with Solomon.

sent his servants] This appears to have been an embassy of congratulation.

3. Solomon's presumption that Hiram knew David's design has not appeared in

the previous history, but it is in accordance with 1 Chr. xxii. 4.

4. The contrast is not between different periods of Solomon's reign, but between his reign and that of his father.

evil occurrent] Rather, *evil occurrence*.

5. *as the LORD spake*] See marg. ref. vii. 13, and cp. 1 Chr. xxii. 10.

6. Solomon's message to Hiram and Hiram's answer (vv. 8, 9) are given much more fully in 2 Chr. ii. 3-16.

cedar-trees] The Hebrew word here and elsewhere translated "cedar," appears to be used, not only of the cedar proper, but of other timber-trees also, as the fir, and, perhaps, the juniper. Still there is no doubt that the real Lebanon cedar is most commonly intended by it. This tree, which still grows on parts of the mountain, but which threatens to die out, was probably much more widely spread anciently. The Tyrians made the masts of their ships from the wood (Ezek. xxvii. 5), and would naturally be as careful to cultivate it as we have ourselves been to grow oak. The Assyrian kings, when they made their expeditions into Palestine, appear frequently to have cut it in Lebanon and Hermon, and to have transported it to their own capitals.

skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians] The mechanical genius and nautical skill of the Phoenicians generally, and of the Sidonians in particular, is noticed by Homer and Herodotus. In the reign of Hiram, Sidon, though perhaps she might have a king of her own, acknowledged the supremacy of Tyre.

- 7 the Sidonians. ¶ And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over
 8 this great people. And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have
 1 considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will
 do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning
 9 timber of fir. My servants shall bring *them* down from Lebanon
 10 unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the
 place that thou shalt ²appoint me, and will cause them to be dis-
 charged there, and thou shalt receive *them*: and thou shalt accom-
 11 plish my desire, ³in giving food for my household. So Hiram
 gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees *according* to all his desire.
 12 ¶ And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand ³measures of wheat
 for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus
 13 gave Solomon to Hiram year by year. And the LORD gave
 Solomon wisdom, ⁴as he promised him: and there was peace
 between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league
 14 together. ¶ And king Solomon raised a ⁴levy out of all Israel;
 and the levy was thirty thousand men. And he sent them to
 Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were
 15 in Lebanon, *and* two months at home: and ⁵Adoniram was over
 the levy. ¶ And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that
 bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains,
- ¹ Heb. *heard*. ² Heb. *send*. ³ Heb. *cors*. ⁴ Heb. *tribute of men*.

9. See marg. ref. The timber was first carried westward from the flanks of Lebanon to the nearest part of the coast, where it was collected into floats, or rafts, which were then conveyed southwards along the coast to Joppa, now *Jaffa*, whence the land journey to Jerusalem was not more than about forty miles. A similar course was taken on the building of the second Temple (Ezr. iii. 7).

food for my household] The Phœnician cities had very little arable territory of their own, the mountain range of Lebanon rising rapidly behind them; and they must always have imported the chief part of their sustenance from abroad. They seem commonly to have derived it from Judæa (marg. ref.). Hiram agreed now to accept for his timber and for the services of his workmen (v. 6) a certain annual payment of grain and oil, both of them the best of their kind, for the sustentation of his Court. This payment was entirely distinct from the supplies furnished to the workmen (marg. ref. 7).

11. The number of measures of wheat was considerably less than Solomon's own annual consumption, which exceeded 32,000 cors (iv. 22); but the small amount of twenty cors of oil, which seems at first sight scarcely to match with the 20,000 cors of wheat, will not appear improbable, if we consider that the oil was to be "pure"—literally "beaten"—i.e. oil extracted from the olives by pounding, and not by means of the press.

year by year] i.e. during all the years that Solomon was engaged in building and was helped by Hiram.

12. *the LORD gave Solomon wisdom*] It seems to be implied that Solomon's Divine gift of wisdom enabled him to make such favourable arrangements with Hiram.

13. *a levy out of all Israel*] This was, apparently, the first time that the Israelites had been called upon to perform forced labour, though it had been prophesied (1 Sam. viii. 16). David had bound to forced service "the strangers" (1 Chr. xxii. 2); but hitherto the Israelites had escaped. Solomon now, in connexion with his proposed work of building the Temple, with the honour of God as an excuse, laid this burden upon them. Out of the 1,300,000 able-bodied Israelites (2 Sam. xxiv. 9), a band of 30,000—one in forty-four—was raised, of whom one-third was constantly at work in Lebanon, while two-thirds remained at home, and pursued their usual occupations. This, though a very light form of task-work, was felt as a great oppression, and was the chief cause of the revolt of the ten tribes at Solomon's death (xii. 4).

15. *that bare burdens, &c.*] Cp. marg. ref. These labourers, whose services were continuous, consisted of "strangers"—"the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites"—whom Solomon, following the example of his father (1 Chr. xxii. 2), condemned to slavery, and employed in this way.

16 beside the chief of Solomon's officers which *were* over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people
 17 that wrought in the work. And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and ^phewed stones, to
 18 lay the foundation of the house. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew *them*, and the ^pstone-squarers; so they prepared timber and stones to build the house. p 1 Chr. 22.2.

CHAP. 6. AND ^ait came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth ^a2 Chr. 3. 1, 2.
 year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which ^bis the second month, that ^bhe ^bbegan to build ^bActs 7. 47.
 2 the house of the LORD. ¶ And ^cthe house which king Solomon ^cSee Ezek. 41. 1, &c.
 built for the LORD, the length thereof *was* threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof
 3 thirty cubits. And the porch before the temple of the house,

¹ Or, *Giblites*: as Ezek. 27. 9.

² Heb. *builf*.

16. Comparing this verse and ix. 23 with 2 Chr. ii. 18, viii. 10, the entire number of the overseers will be seen to be stated by both writers at 3,850; but in the one case nationality, in the other degree of authority, is made the principle of the division.

17. Some of these "great, hewed (no and) stones," are probably still to be seen in the place where they were set by Solomon's builders, at the south-western angle of the wall of the Haram area in the modern Jerusalem. The largest yet found is 38 ft. 9 in. long, and weighs about 100 tons.

18. *the stone-squarers*] The Gebalites (see marg.), the inhabitants of Gebal, a Phœnician city between Beyrout and Tripolis, which the Greeks called Byblus, and which is now known as *Jebel*.

VI. 1. *in the four hundred and eightieth year*] It is upon this statement that all the earlier portion of what is called the "received chronology" depends. Amid minor differences there is a general agreement, which justifies us in placing the accession of Solomon *about* n.c. 1000 [b.c. 1018. Oppert.] But great difficulties meet us in determining the sacred chronology anterior to this. Apart from the present statement, the chronological data of the Old Testament are insufficient to fix the interval between Solomon's accession and the Exodus, since several of the periods which make it up are unestimated. Hence chronologists have based entirely the "received chronology" upon this verse. But the text itself is not free from suspicion. (1) It is the sole passage in the Old Testament which contains the idea of dating events from an era. (2) It is quoted by Origen *without the date*, and seems to have been known only in this shape to Josephus, to Theophilus of Antioch, and to Clement of Alexandria. (3) It is hard to reconcile with other chronological statements in the Old and New Testament. Though the Books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel furnish us with no exact chrono-

logy, they still supply important chronological data—data which seem to indicate for the interval between the Exodus and Solomon, a period considerably exceeding 480 years. For the years actually set down amount to at least 580, or, according to another computation, to 600; and though a certain deduction might be made from this sum on account of the round numbers, this deduction would scarcely do more than balance the addition required on account of the four unestimated periods. Again, in the New Testament, St. Paul (according to the received text) reckons the period from the division of Canaan among the tribes in the sixth year of Joshua (Josh. xiv.), to Samuel the Prophet, at 450 years, which would make the interval between the Exodus and the commencement of the Temple to be 579 years. On the whole, it seems, therefore, probable that the words "in the four hundred and eightieth year, &c.," are an interpolation into the sacred text, which did not prevail generally before the third century of our era.

2. The size of Solomon's Temple depends upon the true length of the ancient cubit, which is doubtful. It has been estimated as somewhat less than a foot, and again as between 19 and 20 inches, a difference of nearly 8 inches, which would produce a variation of nearly 40 feet in the length of the Temple-chamber, and of 46 in that of the entire building. It is worthy of remark that, even according to the highest estimate, Solomon's Temple was really a *small* building, less than 120 feet long, and less than 35 broad. Remark that the measures of the Temple, both "house" and porch (r. 3), were exactly *double* those of the older Tabernacle (Ex. xxvi. 18 note). This identity of proportion amounts to an undesigned coincidence, indicating the thoroughly historical character of both Kings and Exodus.

⁴ See Ezek.

40, 16.

⁵ 41, 16.

⁶ See Ezek.

41, 6.

⁷ ver. 16, 19,

20, 21, 31.

⁸ See Deut.

27, 5, 6.

ch. 5, 19.

⁹ ver. 11, 39

twenty cubits *was* the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits *was* the breadth thereof before the house. 4, 5 And for the house he made ^{d1} windows of narrow lights. And ²against the wall of the house he built ^{e3}chambers round about, *against* the walls of the house round about, *both* of the temple 6 ^fand of the oracle: and he made ⁴chambers round about: the nethermost chamber *was* five cubits broad, and the middle *was* six cubits broad, and the third *was* seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made ⁵narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house. 7 And ⁶the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, 8 while it was in building. The door for the middle chamber *was* in the right ⁶side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the 9 third. ⁸So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the

¹ Or, windows broad within, and narrow without: or, skewed and closed.

² Or, upon, or, joining to.

³ Heb. floors.

⁴ Heb. ribs.

⁵ Heb. narrowings, or, rebatements.

⁶ Heb. shoulder.

4. windows of narrow lights] Either (as in marg.) windows, externally mere slits in the wall, but opening wide within, like the windows of old castles: or, more probably, "windows with fixed lattices." The windows seem to have been placed high in the walls, above the chambers spoken of in *vv.* 5-8.

5. chambers] (Marg. floors). Rather, a lean-to, which completely surrounded three sides of the building, the north, the west, and the south.

6. In order to preserve the sanctity of the Temple, and at the same time allow the attachment to it of secular buildings—sleeping apartments, probably, for the priests and other attendants—Solomon made "rebate-ments" in the wall of the Temple, or in other words built it externally in steps, thus:—The beams, which formed the roof of the chambers and the floors of the upper stories, were then laid on these steps or "rests" in the wall, not piercing the wall, or causing any real

union of the secular with the sacred building. It resulted from this arrangement that the lowest chambers were the narrowest, and the uppermost considerably the widest of all, the wall receding each time by the space of a cubit.

7. The spirit of the command (marg. *ref.*), was followed. Thus the fabric rose without noise.

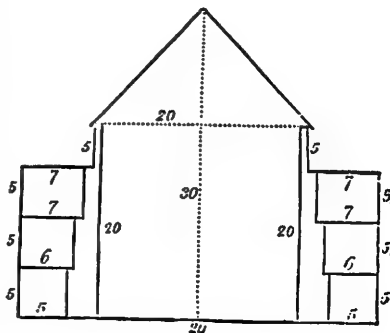
8. The door for the middle chamber] *i.e.* the door which gave access to the mid-most "set of chambers." The chambers on the

ground-floor were possibly reached each by their own door in the outer wall of the lean-to. The middle and upper floors were reached by a single door in the right or south wall, from which a winding staircase ascended to the second tier, while another ascended from the second to the third. The door to the stairs was in the outer wall of the building, not in the wall between the chambers and the Temple. That would have desecrated the Temple far more than the insertion of beams.

9. he built the house, and finished it] *i.e.* the external shell of the house. The internal fittings were added afterwards. See *vv.* 15-22.

covered the house] Roofed it with a wooden roof, sloped like our roofs.

The annexed diagram of a section of the Temple will illustrate *vv.* 2-10. The numbers give the dimensions in cubits.



10 house ¹with beams and boards of cedar. And *then* he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested 11 on the house with timber of cedar. ¶ And the word of the LORD 12 came to Solomon, saying, *concerning* this house which thou art in building, ⁴if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, ⁵which I spake unto 13 David thy father: and ¹I will dwell among the children of 14 Israel, and will not ^mforsake my people Israel. ¶ ¹So Solomon 15 built the house, and finished it. And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, ²both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered *them* on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks 16 of fir. And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built *them* for it within, *even* for the oracle, *even* for the ^omost holy 17 place. And the house, that *is*, the temple before it, was forty

¹ Or, the vaultbeams and the ceilings with cedar.

² Or, from the floor of the house unto the walls, &c.,

and so ver. 10.

⁴ ch. 2. 4.

& 9. 4

⁵ 1 Chr. 22.

10.

¹ Lev. 26. 11.

2 Cor. 6. 16.

Rev. 21. 3.

^m Deut. 31. 6.

ⁿ ver. 38.

^o Ex. 26. 33.

Lev. 16. 2.

ch. 8. 6.

2 Chr. 3. 8.

Ezek. 45. 3.

Heb. 9. 3.

12. The meaning is, "So far as this house goes, thou art obedient (2Sam. vii. 13; 1 Chr. xvii. 12, &c.); if thou wilt be obedient in other things also, then will I perform My word," &c., God's promises being always conditional. The promises made to David were—(1) that he should be succeeded by one of his sons (2Sam. vii. 12; Ps. cxxxii. 11); (2) that the kingdom should be established in the line of his descendants for ever, if they were faithful (Ps. cxxxii. 12); and (3) that the Israelites should be no more afflicted as beforetime (2 Sam. vii. 10). These promises are now confirmed to Solomon, but on the express condition of obedience, and two further promises are added.

13. The first promise to "dwell among" the Israelites had been made to Moses (Ex. xxv. 8, xxix. 45), but had not been repeated to David. The next promise, "I will not forsake, &c.," if not absolutely new, seems to have been more positive and general than previous similar promises (Deut. xxxi. 6, 8; Josh. i. 5). God will not *at any time or under any circumstances* wholly forsake Israel.

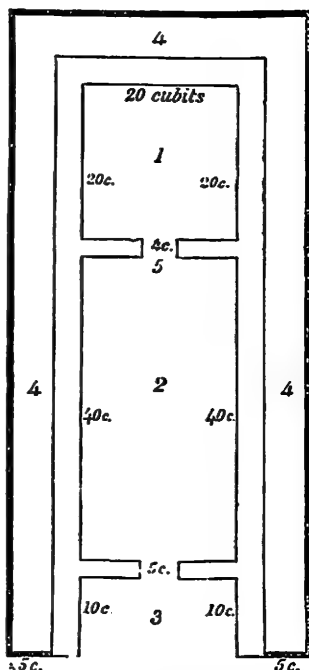
15. The description of this verse applies to the main chamber of the Temple, the Holy Place, only. The writer in v. 16 describes the Holy of Holies.

The marginal rendering of this verse is right, and not the rendering in the text.

[*Ar*] Rather, "juniper." See v. 8 note.

16. The meaning is, that at the distance of 20 cubits, measured along the side walls of the house from the end wall, Solomon constructed a partition, which reached from the floor to the ceiling and had a doorway in it. He thus made within the house, a sanctuary for a Holy of Holies.

17. Cp. the diagram.



GROUND PLAN OF TEMPLE.

1. Holy of Holies, Oracle or Sanctuary.
2. Holy Place, or Main-chamber.
3. Porch.
4. Priests' Chambers.
5. Position of Altar of incense.

18 cubits long. And the cedar of the house within *was* carved with ¹knops and ²open flowers: all *was* cedar; there was no stone seen. And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. And the oracle in the forepart *was* twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with ³puro gold; and *so* covered the altar *which was of* cedar. So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also ⁴the whole altar that *was* by the oracle he overlaid with gold. ¶ And within the oracle ⁵he made two cherubims of ⁶olive tree, each ten cubits high. And five cubits *was* the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other *were* ten cubits. And the other cherub *was* ten cubits: both the cherubims *were* of one measure and one size. The height of the one cherub *was* ten cubits, and *so was it* of the other cherub. And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and ⁷they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. And he overlaid the cherubims with gold. ¶ And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and ⁷open flowers, within and without. And the floor of

^p Ex. 30. 1, 3, 6.

^q Ex. 37. 7, 8, 9.

² Chr. 3. 10, 11, 12.

^r Ex. 25. 20, & 37. 9.

² Chr. 5. 8.

¹ Or, gourds.

² Heb. *openings of flowers*.

³ Heb. *shut up*.

⁴ Or, oily.

⁵ Heb. *trees of o'l*.

⁶ Or, *the cherubims stretched forth their wings*.

⁷ Heb. *openings of flowers*.

18. *knops and open flowers*] Rather, "gourds and opening flower-buds." Imitations of the vegetable world are among the earliest of architectural ornaments. They abound in the architecture of Egypt and Persia. In that of Assyria they occur more sparingly.

20. *the fore part*] Perhaps "the interior."

and so covered, &c.] Rather, "and he covered the altar (of incense) with cedar." The altar was doubtless of stone, and was covered with cedar in preparation for the overlaying with gold. This overlaying was not gilding, but the attachment of thin plates of gold, which had to be fastened on with small nails. Such a mode of ornamentation was common in Babylonia, in Assyria, and in Media.

21. *the house*] *i.e.* the main chamber. *the chains of gold*] Omit "the." Their object was to form a barrier between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

22. The lavish use of the precious metals in ornamentation was a peculiar feature of early Oriental architecture. Recent researches have given reason to believe that two stages of the great temple at Borsippa—now known as the Birs Nimrud—had respectively a gold and a silver coating.

23. *two cherubims*] The pattern of the Tabernacle was followed (margin. ref.), but without servile imitation. The original cherubs were entirely of gold. These, being so much larger, were of wood, merely overlaid with a golden plating. The arrangement of the wings, and the direction of the faces, seem also to have been different. Moses' cherubim "covered with their wings over the mercy seat;" Solomon's stretched out theirs to the full (r. 27), so that the four wings, each five cubits long (r. 24), extended across the whole Sanctuary, the width of which was twenty cubits (r. 20). The former looked toward one another, and were bent downward towards the mercy seat; the latter looked outward, towards the great chamber. (See 2 Chr. iii. 13, and note.)

of olive-tree] The oleaster or wild olive, not the cultivated species.

29. Palms, cherubs, and flowers—the main decorations of Solomon's Temple—bear considerable resemblance to the ornamentation of the Assyrians, a circumstance which can scarcely be accidental.

within and without] *i.e.* both in the inner chamber, or Holy of Holies, and in the outer one.

31 the house he overlaid with gold, within and without. ¶ And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts were ¹a fifth part of the wall. The ²two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and ³open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees. So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, ⁴a fourth part of the wall. And the two doors were of fir tree: the ⁵two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work. And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams. ¶ In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif: and in the eleventh year in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it. BUT Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. ¶ He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon;

¹ Ezek. 41.
23, 24, 25.

² ver. 1.

³ Compare ver. 1.
⁴ ch. 9.10.
⁵ 2 Chr. 8. 1.

¹ Or, *square*.

² Or, *leaves of the doors*.

³ Heb. *openings of flowers*.

⁴ Or, *four-square*.

⁵ Or, *with all the appurtenances thereof, and with all the ordinances thereof*.

31. *a fifth part*] Better than the margin. The meaning seems to be that the lintel was one-fifth of the width of the wall, and each door-post one-fifth of its height. Thus the opening was a square of four cubits, or of six feet.

32. *The two doors*] *i.e.* two leaves which met in the middle, as in the Assyrian gateways generally.

spread gold] The doors were not simply sheeted with gold, like the floors (*r.* 30), but had the gold hammered to fit the forms of the palms, cherubs, and flowers carved upon them. (*r.* 35.) Such hammered metal-work, generally in bronze, has been found in tolerable abundance among the Assyrian remains.

33. *the door of the temple*] The door, that is, which led from the porch into the great chamber of the Temple. Its posts were "a fourth part of the wall," or, "five cubits high," which was, therefore, the height of the doorway.

34. *fir-tree*] Rather, *juniper* (*v.* 8 note). Each door was made in two parts, which folded back one on the other like shutters, by means of hinges. The weight of the doors no doubt made it inconvenient to open the whole door on every occasion.

36. *the inner court*] An outer court is mentioned in 2 Chr. iv. 9. The inner court is probably identical with the "higher court" of Jeremiah (xxxvi. 10), being raised above the outer, as were sometimes the inner courts of Assyrian palaces. The court seems to have surrounded the Temple. Its dimensions may be reasonably presumed to have been double those of the court of the Tabernacle, *i.e.* 100 cubits on each side of

the Temple, and 200 cubits at the ends; or, about 720 feet long by 360 broad.

with three rows of hewed stone] Either a fence enclosing the court, or the area of the court, which was possibly formed by three layers of hewn stone placed one above the other, and was then boarded on the top with cedar planks. Such a construction would no doubt be elaborate; but if it was desired to elevate the inner court above the outer, this is the way in which it would be likely to have been done. The Temple would be placed, like the Assyrian palaces, on an artificial platform; and the platform, being regarded as a part of the sacred building, would be constructed of the best material.

38. *seven years*] More exactly, "seven years and six months," since Zif was the second, and Bul the eighth month. (*r.* 1.)

VII. 1. *thirteen years*] The thirteen years, *i.e.* counting from the end of the seven (*vi.* 38). Solomon's buildings thus occupied him twenty years (*ix.* 10; 2 Chr. viii. 1), from the fourth year of his reign to the twenty-fourth. The difference in the time taken by the Temple and the palace is to be accounted for, (1) by the long period of preparation which preceded the actual building of the former (1 Chr. xxii. 2-4; 1 K. v. 13-18); and (2) by the greater size of the palace, which consisted of several large ranges of buildings. (See the next note.)

2. Many have supposed that the buildings mentioned in *rr.* 1, 2, 8, were three entirely distinct and separate buildings. But it is perhaps best to consider the "house" of *r.* 1 as the palace proper—Solomon's own

the length thereof *was* an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars. 3 And it *was* covered with cedar above upon the ¹beams, *that lay* 4 on forty five pillars, fifteen *in* a row. And *there were* windows 5 *in* three rows, and ²light *was* against light *in* three ranks. And all the ³doors and posts *were* square, with the windows: and 6 light *was* against light *in* three ranks. And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch *was* ⁴before them: and the 7 other pillars and the thick beam *were* ⁵before them. Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, *even* the porch of judgment: and *it was* covered with cedar ⁶from one 8 side of the floor to the other. And his house where he dwelt *had* another court within the porch, *which was* of the like work. ¶ Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, ⁷whom 9 he *had* taken *to wife*, like unto this porch. ¶ All these *were* of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto 10 the coping, and *so* on the outside toward the great court. And

^b ch. 3. 1.

² Chr. 8. 11.

¹ Heb. *ribs*.

² Heb. *sight against sight*.

³ Or, *spaces and pillars were square in prospect*.

⁴ Or, *according to them*.

⁵ Or, *according to them*.

⁶ Heb. *from floor to floor*.

dwelling-house (see v. 8); the house of v. 2, as the state apartments; and the house for Pharaoh's daughter as the *harem* or *zenana*; and to regard these three groups of buildings as distinct, though inter-connected, and as together constituting what is elsewhere termed "the king's house" (ix. 10).

the house of the forest of Lebanon] This name was probably given from the supposed resemblance of the mass of cedar pillars, which was its main feature, to the Lebanon cedar forest. Its length of "a hundred cubits," or 150 feet, was nearly twice as long as the entire Temple without the porch. Some of the great halls in Assyrian palaces were occasionally as much as 180 feet.

The breadth "of fifty cubits," or 75 feet, is a breadth very much greater than is ever found in Assyria, and one indicative of the employment in the two countries of quite different methods of roofing. By their use of pillars the Jews, like the Persians, were able to cover in a very wide space.

four rows] The LXX. gives "three rows." If the pillars were forty-five (v. 3), fifteen in a row, there should have been but three rows, as seems to have been the case in the old palace of Cyrus at Pasargadae. If there were four rows of fifteen, the number of pillars should have been sixty.

4. Either three ranges of windows, one above the other, on either side of the house; or perhaps the three ranges were one in either side wall, and the third in a wall down the middle of the hall, along the course of the midmost row of pillars. The windows were directly opposite one another, giving what we call a *through light*

5. *all the doors and posts*] The doorways, and the posts which formed them, seem to be intended. These were square at top, not arched or rounded. In Assyrian buildings arched doorways were not uncommon. The doorways also, like the windows, exactly faced one another.

6. Probably the porch of the "House of the Forest." Porches of columns immediately in front of columnar chambers were a favourite feature of Persian architecture. The whole verse should be translated, "And he made the porch of the pillars in length 60 cubits, and in breadth 30 cubits, and a porch before them (*i.e.* the pillars), and pillars, and a base (or step) before them." Most of the Persepolitan porches had small pillared chambers at some little distance in front of them.

7. The porch or gate of justice still kept alive the likeness of the old patriarchal custom of sitting in judgment at the gate; exactly as the "Gate of Justice" still recalls it at Granada, and the Sublime Porte—"the Lofty Gate"—at Constantinople.

8. *like unto this porch*] *i.e.* of similar materials, hewn stone and cedar. The *zenana* could not have been a mere portico.

9. The stones were uniform—all cut to certain fixed measures of length, breadth, and thickness. They were not squared only on the face which showed, but also on the sides which fell within the wall and were not seen. Saws appear in Assyrian sculptures of the age of Sennacherib; and fragments of an iron saw have been found at Nimrud.

10. See v. 17 note.

the foundation *was* of costly stones, even great stones, stones of 11 ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. And above *were* costly 12 stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars. And the great court round about *was* with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the 13 house of the LORD, and for the porch of the house. ¶ And king 14 Solomon sent and fetched ^dHiram out of Tyre. ^eHe *was* ^fa widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and ^ghis father *was* a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and ^hhe was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. ¶ And 15 he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work. For he ⁱcast ^jtwo pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and 16 a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about. And he made two chapters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter *was* five cubits, and 17 the height of the other chapter *was* five cubits: and nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapters which *were* upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one 18 chapter, and seven for the other chapter. And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to

^c John 10.23.
Acts 3. 11.
^d 2 Chr. 4.11,
Hiram:
See ver. 40.
^e 2 Chr. 2.14.
^f 2 Chr. 4.16.
^g Ex. 31. 3.
^h & 36. 1.
ⁱ 2 Kin. 25.
17.
^j 2 Chr. 3. 15.
& 4. 12.
Jer. 52. 21.

¹ Hob. *the son of a widow woman*.

² Heb. *fashioned*.

12. The palace, like the Temple, had two courts (vi. 36), not, however, one immediately within the other. The lesser court of the palace seems to have been a private inner court among the buildings (v. 8). The greater court was outside all the buildings, surrounding the palace on every side. Assyrian palaces had always such an external court, and had generally one or more inner courts or quadrangles.

both for the inner court] By a slight alteration of the text, the meaning would be "as (was done) in the inner court, &c. and in the porch."

13. *Hiram*] A man who bore the same name as the king of Tyre, a master workman, known as Hiram Ab, i.e. Master Hiram (2 Chr. ii. 13, iv. 16).

14. Hiram's mother, while by birth of the tribe of Dan, had had for her first husband a man of the tribe of Naphtali. (Cp. this verse and marg. ref.)

all his work] The work that he personally did for Solomon seems to have been limited to metal-work, and indeed to works in brass. (See below, v. 45, and cp. 2 Chr. iv. 16.)

15. These famous pillars, which were broken in pieces by the Babylonians when they destroyed Jerusalem (2K. xxv. 13; Jer. lli. 17), were probably for ornament, standing by themselves under or in front of the porch. It is certain that the Phœnicians used isolated metal columns as sacred ornaments, so that Hiram would be familiar with such a mode of ornamentation. Eighteen cubits appear to have been the height of the shaft only. Adding the capital (rr. 16, 19), the entire metal pillar was 27 cubits high; and if it had a stone base of eight cubits, which would not be greatly out of propor-

tion, the height of 35 cubits (52½ feet, 2 Chr. iii. 15) would have been reached. The height of some of the Persepolitan columns, with which these pillars may be best compared, is 67 feet. The circumference of 12 cubits (18 feet) implies a diameter of about 5 feet 9 inches at the base, which would make the column somewhat heavy in appearance. Egyptian pillars were, however, even thicker in proportion to their height. On the supposition that a portion of the original text has fallen out, this verse has been thus completed: "He cast two pillars of brass; eighteen cubits was the height of the one pillar, and eighteen cubits *was* the height of the other pillar; and a line of twelve cubits compassed the one pillar, and a line of twelve cubits compassed the other pillar."

16. The general character of the *chapters* or capitals, their great size in proportion to the shaft, which is as one to two, and their construction of two quite different members, remind us of the pillars used by the Persians in their palaces, which were certainly more like Jachin and Boaz than any pillars that have reached us from antiquity. The ornamentation, however, seems to have been far more elaborate than that of the Persian capitals.

17. *nets*, &c.] Rather, "Nets chequerwise, and festoons chainwise,"—probably a fine network over the whole, and chainwork hanging in festoons outside.

seven for the one chapter] The LXX. reading is preferable. "A net for the one chapter and a net for the other chapter." Cp. v. 41.

18. The pomegranate was one of the commonest ornaments in Assyria. It was used on quivers, on spear-shafts, and mace-heads, in patterns on doorways and pave-

cover the chapters that *were* upon the top, with pomegranates: 19 and so did he for the other chapter. And the chapters that *were* upon the top of the pillars *were* of lily work in the porch, 20 four cubits. And the chapters upon the two pillars *had pomegranates* also above, over against the belly which *was* by the network: and the pomegranates *were* ¹two hundred in rows round 21 about upon the other chapter. ²And he set up the pillars in ³the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof ¹Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, 22 and called the name thereof ²Boaz. And upon the top of the pillars *was* lily work: so *was* the work of the pillars finished. 23 ¶ And he made ³a molten sea, ten cubits ³from the one brim to the other: *it was* round all about, and his height *was* five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. 24 And under the brim of it round about *there were* knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, ³compassing the sea round about: the 25 knops *were* cast in two rows, when it *was* cast. It stood upon ³twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, 26 and all their hinder parts *were* inward. And it *was* an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof *was* wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained ²two thousand baths.

¹ See 2 Chr. 3. 16.
² 2 Chr. 3. 17.
³ ch. 6. 3.

³ 2 Kin 25. 13.
2 Chr 4. 2.
Jer. 52. 17.

³ 2 Chr. 4. 3.

³ 2 Chr. 4. 4, 5.
Jer. 52. 23.

³ See 2 Chr. 4. 5.

¹ That is, *He shall establish.*

² That is, *In it is strength.*

³ Heb. *from his brim to his brim.*

nents, &c. It is doubtful whether a symbolical meaning attached to it, or whether it was merely selected as a beautiful natural form.

19. There is a cornice of (so-called) lily-work at Persepolis, consisting of three ranges of broadish rounded leaves, one over the other. Lilies are also represented with much spirit on a bas-relief from Koyunjik.

20. In this verse also a portion of the original text is supposed to have fallen out in consequence of the repetition of words. The full phrase of the original has been retained in vv. 16 and 17. It may be restored thus:—"And the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about *upon the one chapter, and two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter.*" The "four hundred" (v. 42; 2 Chr. iv. 13), are obtained by counting the pomegranates of both pillars together. In Jerem. lii. 23, is an account of the arrangement of a single row of pomegranates, whereof each pillar had two.

21. The LXX. in the parallel passage (marg. ref.), translate Jachin and Boaz by *κατὸρθωσις* and *ἰσχυς*—"Direction" and "Strength." The literal meaning of the names is given in the margin. The meaning was probably "God will establish in strength" (i.e. firmly) the Temple and the religion connected with it.

23. The "molten sea" of Solomon, so called from its great size, took the place of the laver of the Tabernacle (Ex. xxx. 18-21), which was required for the ablutions of the

priests. It was ten cubits, or fully fifteen feet, in diameter at top, and therefore forty-seven feet in circumference, with a depth of 5 cubits, or 7½ feet. As a vessel of these dimensions, if hemispherical, would certainly not hold 2000 (v. 26), much less 3000 (2 Chr. iv. 3) *baths*, the *bat* equalling 8½ gallons, it is now generally supposed that the bowl bulged considerably below the brim, and further, that it had a "foot,"—or basin which received the water as it was drawn out by taps from the bowl. The "2000 baths" may give the quantity of water ordinarily supplied to the "sea;" the "3000 baths" the utmost that the laver could anyhow take. Bowls of a considerable size are represented in the Assyrian bas-reliefs; but none of such dimensions as Solomon's. The largest mentioned by the Greeks held only 5400 gallons, less than one-third of the contents of the "molten sea," even according to the lowest estimate.

24. *knops*] Literally, "gourds,"—i.e. a boss or ball ornament encircled the rim of the bowl in two rows.

25. Josephus charged Solomon with a breach of the Commandment (Ex. xx. 4, 5), on account of the oxen here and the lions for his throne. The charge expresses the prohibition which some Jews have conceived the Commandment to urge against the arts of sculpture and painting.

26. The palm or hand-breadth seems to have a little exceeded three inches.

with flowers of lilies] Rather, "in the shape of a lily flower." The rim was

27 ¶ And he made ten bases of brass; four cubits *was* the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits 28 the height of it. And the work of the bases *was* on this manner: they had borders, and the borders *were* between the ledges: 29 and on the borders that *were* between the ledges *were* lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges *there was* a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen *were* certain additions 30 made of thin work. And every base had four brassen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver *were* undersetters molten, at the side of every 31 addition. And the mouth of it within the chapter and above *was* a cubit: but the mouth thereof *was* round *after* the work of the base, a cubit and an half: and also upon the mouth of it 32 *were* gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round. And under the borders *were* four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels *were* ¹joined to the base: and the height of a wheel *was* 33 a cubit and half a cubit. And the work of the wheels *was* like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their navos, 34 and their felloes, and their spokes, *were* all molten. And *there were* four undersetters to the four corners of one base: and the 35 undersetters *were* of the very base itself. And in the top of the base *was* *there* a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof *were* 36 of the same. For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees,

¹ Heb. *in the base*.

slightly curved outwards, like the rim of an ordinary drinking-cup, or the edge of a lily blossom. See 2 Chr. iv. 5 marg.

27. *ten bases of brass*] These were for the ten lavers (v. 38. See 2 Chr. iv. 6). In general terms the bases were square stands, 6 feet each way, and 4½ feet high, elaborately ornamented on their four sides, and resting upon four wheels, 2½ feet in diameter. Each stand supported a laver 6 feet high, which contained 40 baths (v. 38), or about 340 gallons.

28. *borders*] Rather, “panels” (so vv. 32, 35), a set of square compartments between the “ledges” or borders, or mouldings. Below the panelling, with its ornamentation of lions, oxen (the two animal forms which occur most frequently in Assyrian decoration), and cherubim, was a space decorated with “additions of thin work” (v. 29).

Upon the “ledges” (v. 29) which surrounded the top of the base there was a stand for the laver, distinct from the upper surface of the base.

30. *plates of brass*] Rather, “brazen axletrees.”

The “undersetters” (literally, “shoulders”) are conjectured to have been four brackets, or bars, proceeding from the four upper corners of the bases, and stretching upwards to the outer rim of the laver, which thus rested partly upon them.

at the side of every addition] Rather, “each opposite garlands.” The laver was

ornamented with a garland at the place where the support reached it.

31. It seems impossible to determine what is meant by the “mouth” of the laver, or what by its “chapter.”

32. With the diameter (2½ ft.) of the wheel here, may be compared that of the earliest Assyrian chariot-wheels, which was under 3 feet; and that of the front wheels seen in representations of Assyrian close carriages, which scarcely exceed ¼th of the height of the entire vehicle. The wheels of these moveable lavers appear to have been a little less than ¼th of the height of the whole structure.

34. The undersetters were cast with the base, not afterwards attached to it, and were therefore stronger and better able to support the laver.

35. *a round compass*] A circular elevation, half a cubit high, rather than a circular depression, half a cubit deep. Cp. v. 29. The “ledges” and “borders” of the top of the base were its “hands” and its “panels.” These “hands,” distinct from the “shoulders” (v. 30), were probably supports, adorned with engraved plates (v. 36), either of the elevated circle on which the laver stood, or of the lower part of the laver itself. Both panels and “hands” were “of the same,” i.e. of one piece with the base, cast at the same time.

36. *according to the proportion of every one*, i.e. “as large as the room left for them allowed,” implying that the panels were

according to the 'proportion of every one, and additions round
 37 about. After this manner he made the ten bases: all of them
 2 Chr. 4. 6. 38 had one casting, one measure, and one size. ¶ Then ²made he
 ten lavers of brass: one laver contained forty baths: and every
 laver was four cubits: and upon every one of the ten bases
 39 one laver. And he put five bases on the right ²side of the
 house, and five on the left side of the house: and he set the sea
 on the right side of the house eastward over against the south.
 40 And ³Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons.
 ¶ So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king
 41 Solomon for the house of the LORD: the two pillars, and the two
 bowls of the chapiters that were on the top of the two pillars;
 1 var. 17, 18. and the two ²networks, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters
 42 which were upon the top of the pillars; and four hundred pome-
 granates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates
 for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that
 43 were ⁴upon the pillars; and the ten bases, and ten lavers on the
 44, 45 bases; and one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea; ⁴and
 the pots, and the shovels, and the basons: and all these vessels,
 which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD,
 46 were of ⁵bright brass. ⁶In the plain of Jordan did the king cast
 them, ⁶in the clay ground between ⁷Succoth and ⁸Zarthan.
 47 And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, ⁷because they were
 exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass ⁸found out.
 48 ¶ And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the
 house of the LORD: ⁹the altar of gold, and ²the table of gold,
 49 whereupon ⁹the shewbread was, and the candlesticks of pure
 gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle,
 50 with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold, and the
 bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the
⁹censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors
 of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the
 51 house, to wit, of the temple. ¶ So was ended all the work that
 king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon
 brought in the ¹things ⁶which David his father had dedicated;
 2 Sam. 8. 11. even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among
 2 Chr. 5. 1. the treasures of the house of the LORD.

¹ Heb. nakedness.

² Heb. shoulder.

³ Heb. Hiram: See ver. 13.

⁴ Heb. upon the face of the pillars.

⁵ Heb. made bright, or, scoured.

⁶ Heb. in the thickness of the ground.

⁷ Heb. for the exceeding multitude.

⁸ Heb. searched, 1 Chr. 22. 11.

⁹ Heb. and pans.

¹ Heb. holy things of David.

smaller than those on the sides of the base, and allowed scant room for the representations.

38. every laver was four cubits] Assuming height to be intended, and taking the cubit at 20 inches, the entire height of the lavers as they stood upon their wheeled stands would seem to have been 13 ft. 9 in. It is evident, therefore, that the water must have been drawn from them, as from the "molten sea," through cocks or taps.

40. lavers] Rather, according to the true reading, "pots," (Cp. v. 45; 2 Chr. iv. 16.) The "pots" were the caldrons in which it was usual to boil the peace-offerings. See 1 Sam. ii. 13, 14.

46. Succoth and Zarthan] See Judg. vii. 22, viii. 5 note.

47. The brass of which the two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, the brazen sea, and the various vessels were made had been taken by David from two cities belonging to Hadadezer, king of Zobah (1 Chr. xviii. 8).

48. See note to vi. 20 and 2 Chr. iv. 19-22.
 49, 50. See notes to Ex. xxv. 31-38. The "bowls" of r. 50 were the "bowls" for the tables (Ex. xxxvii. 16), large vases containing oil for the lamps.

51. the things which David had dedicated] Not only the things described in 1 Chr. xxviii. 14-18, but also the spoil of the nations which he had subdued (marg. ref.),

CHAP. 8. THEN ^aSolomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the ¹chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, ^bthat they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD ^cout of the city of David, which *is* Zion. ¶ And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the ^dfeast in the month Ethanim, ^ewhich *is* the seventh month. And all the elders of Israel came, ^fand the priests took up the ark. And they brought up the ark of the LORD, ^gand the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the tabernacle, even those did the ^hpriests and the Levites bring up. And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, *were* with him before the ark, ⁱsacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. And the priests ^jbrought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto ^khis place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, *even* ^lunder the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth ^mtheir two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they ⁿdrew out the staves, that the ^oends of the staves were seen out in the ^pholy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day. ^qThere was nothing in the ark ^rsave the two tables of stone, which Moses ^sput there at

^a 2 Chr. 5. 2, &c.

^b 2 Sam. 6. 17.

^c 2 Sam. 5. 7, 9.

^d Lev. 23. 34.

^e 2 Chr. 7. 8.

^f Num. 4. 15.

^g Josh. 3. 3, 6.

^h 1 Chr. 15. 14, 15.

ⁱ 1 Chr. 3. 4.

^j 2 Chr. 1. 3.

^k 2 Sam. 6. 13.

^l 2 Sam. 6. 13.

^m 2 Sam. 6. 17.

ⁿ Ex. 26. 33, 34.

^o ch. 6. 10.

^p ch. 6. 27.

^q Ex. 25. 14.

^r Ex. 25. 21.

^s Deut. 10. 2.

^t Deut. 10. 5.

^u Ex. 40. 20.

¹ Heb. *princes*.

² Heb. *heads*.

³ Or, *ark*: as 2 Chr. 5. 9.

and also the vessels of gold, silver, and brass, sent him by Toi king of Hamath, on his victory over Hadadezer. Solomon now brought these into the Temple treasury. A sacred treasury had been established at least as early as the time of Saul, to which Saul himself, Abner, Joab, and others, had contributed (1 Chr. xxvi. 28).

VIII. 1. There seems to be a contrast here between the more popular proceedings of David (2 Sam. vi. 1), and the statelier system of his son, who merely summons the chief men as representatives of the nation. The rest of the people "assembled themselves" (v. 2), and were mere spectators of the solemnity.

2. *the feast in the month Ethanim*] i.e. the Feast of Tabernacles, or In-gathering, the commemoration of the dwelling in booths at the time of the Exodus (marg. ref.), and the festival of thanksgiving on account of the completion of harvest (Ex. xxiii. 16; Lev. xxiii. 39; Deut. xvi. 13). It was one of the three on which the people were required to "appear before the Lord."

3. In 2 Chr. v. 4, "*the Levites took up the ark*;" and by the Law the Ark was the special charge of the Kohathites (Num. iii. 31, iv. 15). But all priests were Levites (Josh. iii. 3), though all Levites were not priests. And as Joshua had done (Josh. iii. 6, vi. 6), so Solomon called upon the priests to bear the holy structure, allowing to mere Levites only the inferior honour of helping to transport the Tabernacle and the vessels of the Sanctuary.

4. *and the tabernacle of the congregation*]

Not the tented structure erected for the Ark on Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi. 17) by David, but the original Tabernacle made by Moses, which had hitherto remained at Gibeon (marg. ref.). The Tabernacle and its holy vessels were probably placed in the treasury.

8. It was forbidden to withdraw the staves wholly from the rings (marg. ref.); but they appear to have been now drawn forward in such a way that their ends or heads could be seen from the Holy Place, or great chamber of the Temple, though without their being visible from the porch or vestibule. Either the doorway into the Holy of Holies was not exactly opposite the Ark, but a little on one side; or, though that doorway was in the middle, opposite the Ark, the doorway from the porch into the main chamber was not opposite to it. In Assyrian temples the arrangement of the outer door, the inner door, and the sanctuary, seems to have been designedly such that a mere passer-by on the outside should not obtain even a glimpse of the shrine. It is suggested that the withdrawal of the staves was intended as a sign that the Ark had reached "the place of its rest," and was not to be borne about any more.

there they are unto this day] This is a quotation from an author who lived while the Temple was still standing. See also ix. 21.

9. Comparing this statement with Heb. i. 4, it would seem that Solomon, now that the sacred chest had reached its final resting-place, and stood in a large chamber surrounded by tables (2 Chr. iv. 8), removed

p Exod. 34.
27, 28.
Deut. 4. 13.
q 2 Chr. 5.
13, 14.
r 2 Chr. 6.
1, &c.
s Lev. 16. 2.
Ps. 18. 11.
t 2 Sam. 7. 13.
u Ps. 132. 14.
v 2 Sam. 6. 18.
w Luke 1. 68.
x 2 Sam. 7.
5, 25.
y 2 Chr. 6. 5,
&c.
z ver. 23.
Deut. 12. 11.
1 Sam. 16. 1.
2 Sam. 7. 8.
d 1 Chr. 17. 1.
e 2 Chr. 6.
8, 9.
f 2 Sam. 7.
5, 12, 13.
ch. 5. 3, 5.
g 1 Chr. 28.
5, 6.
h ver. 9.
Deut. 31. 26.
i 2 Chr. 6.
12, &c.
k Ex. 9. 33.
Ezra 9. 5.
Isai. 1. 15.
l Ex. 15. 11.
2 Sam. 7. 22.

Horeb, ^{1p} when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. ¶ And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud ^q filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD. ¶ Then spake Solomon, ^r The LORD said that he would dwell ^s in the thick darkness. 'I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, ^t a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. ¶ And the king turned his face about, and ^u blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood;) and he said, ^v Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which ^w spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it, saying, "Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that ^x my name might be therein; but I chose ^y David to be over my people Israel. And ^z it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. "And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. Nevertheless ^a thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name. And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, ^b as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is ^c the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. ¶ And Solomon stood before ^d the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and ^e spread forth his hands toward heaven: 23 and he said, LORD God of Israel, ^f there is no God like thee, in

¹ Cr, where.

the pot of manna and the rod from the interior, and set them elsewhere in the Holy of Holies.

10. The cloud—the visible symbol of the Divine Presence—the Shechinah of the Targums—which had been promised before the Ark was begun (Ex. xxix. 43), and had filled the Tabernacle as soon as it was completed (do. xl. 34), and which had probably been seen from time to time during the long interval when we have no express mention of it, now once more appeared in full magnificence, and took, as it were, possession of the building which Solomon was dedicating. The Presence of God in the Temple henceforth was thus assured to the Jews, and His approval of all that Solomon had done was signified.

11. As in the case of Moses (Ex. xl. 35), so now the glory of the Lord, the manifestation of the Divine Presence, which the cloud usually veiled, shone forth from it with such brilliancy, that mortal man could not bear the sight.

12. Rather, "The Lord spake of dwelling in the thick darkness" (marg. ref.). Solomon sees in the cloud the visible sym-

bol of God's Presence, and accepts the token as a proof that He has taken possession of the house built for Him, and will thenceforth dwell there (v. 13).

14. Solomon had spoken the preceding words, addressed to God, with his face directed to the Holy of Holies. He now turned round and looked outwards towards the people. The people "stood" to hear him—the attitude of respect and attention. This first blessing seems to have been without speech—an inward prayer accompanied by the ordinary gesture of blessing.

15. The exact words of 2 Sam. vii. are not reproduced; only their general sense is given. In v. 18, what was merely tacitly implied was regarded as actually "said."

16. The marg. ref. completes the sense of this verse here. The passage is in accordance with archaic modes of speech, and is probably the more verbally accurate of the two.

22. The marg. ref. shows that the king was so placed as to be seen by all present, and that, before beginning his prayer, he knelt down upon his knees (cp. v. 54).

23. Cp. Deut. vii. 9.

- heaven above, or on earth beneath,^a who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying,^o There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; ²so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. ²And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. ¶ But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive. ¶ If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness. ¶ When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers. ¶ When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest

^m Deut. 7. 9.
Neh. 1. 5.
Dan. 9. 4.
ⁿ Gen. 17. 1.
ch. 3. 6.
2 Kin. 20. 3.

^o 2 Sam. 7.
12, 16.
ch. 2. 4.

^p 2 Sam. 7.
25.

^q 2 Chr. 2. 6.
Isai. 66. 1.
Jer. 23. 24.
Acts 7. 49.
^r 2 Cor. 12. 2.

^s Deut. 12. 11.

^t Dan. 6. 10.
^u 2 Chr. 20. 0.
Neh. 1. 0.

^v Ex. 22. 11.

^w Deut. 25. 1.

^x Lev. 26. 17.
Deut. 28. 25.

^y Lev. 26.
39, 40.
Neh. 1. 0.

^z Lev. 26. 10.
Deut. 28. 23.

¹ Heb. *There shall not be cut off unto thee a man from my sight.*

² Heb. *only if.*
³ Or, *in this place.*
⁴ Or, *in this place.*

⁵ Heb. *and he require an oath of him, Lev. 5. 1.*
⁶ Or, *toward.*

28. Solomon's prayer is, perhaps, generally for the fulfilment of all the promises made to David in connection with the building of the Temple. But there seems to be special allusion in this verse to the promise recorded in Ps. cxxii. 14.

27. *heaven of heavens*] Cp. Deut. x. 14; Ps. cxlviii. 4. It seems to mean the heaven in its most extended compass. Solomon combines with his belief in Jehovah's special Presence in the Temple, the strongest conviction that He is no local or finite deity, but is ever present everywhere. Cp. Ps. cxxxix. 7-10.

29. The choice of Jerusalem as the place seems to have been made by special revela-

tion to David. See Ps. lxxviii. 68, cxxxii. 13; and cp. 1 Chr. xxii. 1.

toward this place] Better (here and in v. 30) than the marginal "in." Wherever they were, the Jews always worshipped *towards* the Temple. (See marg. ref.)

and when thou hearest, forgive] Lit., "both hear and forgive"—i.e., "hear the prayer, and forgive the sin" which alone causes God to chasten men or to withhold from them His choicest blessings.

31. *the oath come before, &c.*] "The oath" is equivalent to "the man who swears the oath." A slight alteration in the present Hebrew text gives the sense "and he (the accused) go and swear before thine altar," &c. The threats and the promises, the punish-

c Ps. 25. 4.
 & 27. 11.
 d 1 Sam. 12.
 23.
 * Lev. 23.
 16, 25, 26.
 Deut. 28.
 21, &c.
 2 Chr. 20. 9.

/ 1 Sam. 10. 7.
 1 Chr. 28. 9.
 Ps. 11. 4.
 Jer. 17. 10.
 Acts 1. 24.
 o Ps. 130. 4.

A Deut. 3. 24.

' 1 Sam. 17.
 46.
 2 Kin. 10. 10.
 1's. 67. 2.
 * Ps. 102. 15.

36 them: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou ^cteach them ^dthe good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.
 37 ¶ ^eIf there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their ^fcities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness ^gthere be; what prayer and supplication soever be ^hmade by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands
 38 toward this house: then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, ⁱeven thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) ^jthat they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou
 41 gavest unto our fathers. ¶ Moreover concerning a stranger, that ^kis not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country
 42 for thy name's sake; (for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy ^lstrong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he
 43 shall come and pray toward this house; hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: ^mthat all people of the earth may know thy name, to
 44 ⁿfear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that ^othis house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.
 ¶ If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD
 45 toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house
 46 that I have built for thy name: then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their ^pcause. ¶ If

¹ Or, jurisdiction.

² Heb. thy name is called upon this house.

³ Heb. the way of the city.
⁴ Or, r ght.

ments and calamities of *vv.* 31-38 were distinctly named in the Law. See marg. ref.

36. *teach them, &c.*] Rather, "when thou art teaching them (by thy chastisement) the good way that they should walk in," i.e. when thou art still teaching, not taking vengeance.

37. *in the land of their cities*] Literally, "in the land of their gates." Hence the marginal translation "jurisdiction," because judgments were pronounced in the town gates (Deut. xvi. 18). Another reading gives "in one of their cities."

38. *know every man the plague of his own heart*] i.e. perceive one's sinfulness, or recognise one's sufferings as Divine chastisements, and sin as their cause.

41. Nothing is more remarkable in the Mosaic Law than its liberality with regard to strangers, both in general (Ex. xxii. 21; Lev. xxv. 35; Deut. x. 19) and in religious matters (Num. xv. 14-16; Deut. xxxi. 12). It is quite in the spirit of these enactments that Solomon, having first prayed to God on behalf of his fellow-countrymen, should next go on to intercede for the strangers, and to ask for their prayers the same acceptance which he had previously begged for the prayers of faithful Israelites.

for thy name's sake] i.e. "to visit the place where Thou hast set Thy name" (Cp. Deut. xii. 5, 11, &c.).

42. *great name*] A somewhat rare expression. It does not occur at all in the Pentateuch; though "mighty hand" and the "stretched out arm" are so frequent (Ex. vi. 6, xiii. 9; Deut. ix. 29); only once in Joshua (vii. 9); and twice in the Psalms (lxxvi. 1, xcix. 3). About the time of the Captivity the use of the phrase became more common (Ezek. xxxvi. 23; Jer. x. 6, xlii. 26).

43. *that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee*] Solomon prays that the result of Jehovah's hearing the prayers of heathens addressed towards the Temple may be the general conversion of the world to the worship of Him. Cp. Pss. xcvi., xcvi.

this house, &c.] Lit., as in the margin. In Scripture, when God's Name is said to be "called upon" persons or things, it seems to be meant that God is really present in them, upholding them and sanctifying them. This passage therefore means, that the heathen, when their prayers, directed towards the Temple, are granted, will have a full assurance that God is present in the building in some very special way.

- they sin against thee, (¹for *there is* no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives ²unto the land of the
- 47 enemy, far or near; ³yet if they shall ¹bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, ⁴saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so ⁵return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and ⁶pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have
- 49 built for thy name: then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their
- 50 ⁷cause, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and ⁸give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them:
- 51 for ⁹they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, ¹⁰from the midst of the furnace of iron: that thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to
- 53 hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, ¹¹as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord
- 54 God. ¶ And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees
- 55 with his hands spread up to heaven. And he stood, ¹²and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying,
- 56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: ¹³there hath not ¹⁴failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand
- 57 of Moses his servant. The LORD our God be with us, as he was
- 58 with our fathers: ¹⁵let him not leave us, nor forsake us: that he may ¹⁶incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments,

¹ Heb. bring back to their heart.² Or, right.³ Heb. fullen.

47. *bethink themselves*] Lit., as in margin—i.e. "reflect," "consider seriously." Cp. Deut. xxx. 1.

sinned, done perversely, committed wickedness] The words here used seem to have become the standard form of expressing contrition when the time of the Captivity arrived and the Israelites were forcibly removed to Babylon (cp. marg. reff.). The three expressions are thought to form a climax, rising from negative to positive guilt, and from mere wrongful acts to deprivation of the moral character.

50. *compassion, &c.*] Not merely such compassion as Evil-Merodach shewed towards Jehoiachin (2 K. xxv. 27-30; Jer. lii. 31-34), but such as Cyrus and Artaxerxes shewed in allowing the captive Jews to return to their own land (Ez. i. 3; Neh. ii. 6).

51. *the furnace of iron*] Egypt is so called as a place of severe trial and affliction.

54. If the prayer of Solomon be, as it has all the appearance of being, a genuine document of the time, preserved in the archives to which the authors of both Kings and Chronicles had access, all theories of the late origin of Deuteronomy must be regarded as baseless. While references are not infrequent to other portions of the Pentateuch, the language of the prayer is mainly modelled upon Deuteronomy, the promises and threats contained in which are continually before the mind of the writer. (See marg. reff.).

58. *incline our hearts*] This is a doctrine which first appears in Scripture in the Davidical Psalms (see marg. ref. and Ps. cxli. 4). Solomon in this prayer seems to be

- 59 which he commanded our fathers. And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel ¹at all times, as the matter shall require; ²that all the people of the earth may know that *the LORD is God, and that there is none* else. Let your ³heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day. ¶ And ⁴the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifices before the LORD. And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. ⁵The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because ⁶the brasen altar that *was* before the LORD *was* too little to receive the burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings. ¶ And at that time Solomon hold ⁷a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from ⁸the entering in of Hamath unto ⁹the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, ¹⁰seven days and seven days, ¹¹even fourteen days. ¹²On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they ¹³blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.
- CHAP. 9. AND** ¹it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, ²and the king's house, and ³2 ⁴Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, ⁵as he had appeared unto
- ¹ Josh. 4. 24.
¹ Sam. 17. 46.
² Kin. 19. 19.
³ Deut. 4.
³⁵, 39.
⁴ Ch. 11. 4.
⁵ 15. 3, 14.
² Kin. 20. 3.
⁶ 2 Chr. 7. 4, &c.
⁷ 2 Chr. 7. 7.
⁸ 2 Chr. 4. 1.
⁹ ver. 2.
¹⁰ Lev. 23. 34.
¹¹ Num. 34. 8.
¹² Josh. 13. 5.
¹³ Gen. 15. 18.
¹⁴ Num. 31. 5.
¹⁵ 2 Chr. 7. 8.
¹⁶ 2 Chr. 7. 9, 10.
¹⁷ 2 Chr. 7. 11, &c.
¹⁸ Ch. 7. 1.
¹⁹ 2 Chr. 8. 6.
²⁰ Ch. 3. 5.

¹ Heb. *the thing of a day in his day.*² Or, *thanked.*

thoroughly penetrated with his father's spirit.

61. *as at this day*] i.e. "as ye are now doing, in coming with pious intentions to this festival."

63. These numbers have been thought incredible, but they are not impossible. At least 100,000, or 120,000 men (v. 65) were assembled; and as they *all* offered sacrifices with the king (v. 62), the number of victims must have been enormous. Part of the flesh of so many victims would be eaten; but much of the meat may have been privately burnt (Lev. xix. 6), the object of the sacrifice being the glory of God, and not the convenience of the people. Profusion was a usual feature of the sacrifices of antiquity.

64. *the middle of the court*] Or, "the *whole* area of the court"—all the mid space within the enclosing walls, which thus became one huge altar, on any part of which victims might be offered at one and the same time.

65. A feast necessarily accompanied such a sacrifice as Solomon was holding. Cp. Lev. xix. 5. On the present occasion there was a double festival—first, the Feast of the Dedication, from the 8th to the 15th of the month Ethanim (or Tisri), and then the

Feast of Tabernacles, from the 15th to the 22nd (v. 2). On the day after this, "the eighth day," counting from the commencement of the second seven, and the twenty-third day of the month (marg. ref. m), Solomon dismissed the people to their homes.

the entering in of Hamath] Cp. Num. xiii. 21, note and marg. ref. The phrase marks the extreme northern boundary of the Holy Land.

the river of Egypt] The Wady-el-Arish, the only large water-course on this coast (marg. ref.).

66. *their tents*] i.e. "their homes." The word "tents" was used for "houses" from an old habit of speech, which had come down from the time when the Israelites were a nomadic nation.

IX. 2. This appearance is fixed by v. 1 to Solomon's twenty-fourth year, the year in which he completed his palace (vi. 37, 38, vii. 1). The fact seems to be that, though the Temple was finished in Solomon's eleventh year, the Dedication did not take place till his twenty-fourth year. The order of the narrative in Kings agrees with this view, since it interposes the account of the building of the palace (vii. 1-12), and of the

- 3 him at Gibeon. And the LORD said unto him, 'I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, 'to put my name there for ever; 'and mine eyes and mine heart shall be 4 there perpetually. And if thou wilt ^awalk before me, 'as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, *and* wilt keep 5 my statutes and my judgments: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, 'as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne 6 of Israel. ¹But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments *and* my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other 7 gods, and worship them: 'then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed 'for my name, will I cast out of my sight; 'and Israel 8 shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: and 'at this house, *which* is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, 'Why hath the LORD 9 done thus unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil. 10 ¶ And 'it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the 11 king's house, '(now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities 12 in the land of Galilee. And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they ¹pleased him

2 Kin. 20.5.
1's. 10. 17.
/ ch. 8. 20.
o Deut. 11.
12.
a Gen. 17. 1.
i ch. 11. 4, 6,
38.
& 14. 8.
& 15. 5.
* 2 Sam. 7.
12, 16.
ch. 2. 4.
& 6. 12.
1 Chr. 22. 10.
Ps. 132. 12.
1 2 Sam. 7. 14.
Ps. 89. 30.
m Deut. 4. 26.
2 Kin. 17. 23.
& 25. 21.
n Jer. 7. 14.
o Deut. 28.
37.
Ps. 44. 14.
p 2 Chr. 7. 21.
q Deut. 29.
24, 25, 26.
Jer. 22. 2, 9.

r ch. 10. 37.
38.
& 7. 1.
2 Chr. 8. 1.
* 2 Chr. 8. 2.

¹ Heb. were not right in his eyes.

making of the furniture (vii. 13-51), between the completion of the building of the Temple (vi. 38) and the ceremony of the Dedication (viii.).

3. The answer given by God to Solomon's prayer is reported more fully in 2 Chronicles (vii. 12-22).

When God puts His Name in the temple He does it, in intention, *for ever*. He will not arbitrarily withdraw it; there it will remain *for ever*, so far as God is concerned. But the people may by unfaithfulness drive it away (rr. 7-9).

and mine eyes and my heart] An answer in excess of the prayer (viii. 29); "Not Mine eyes only, but Mine eyes *and* Mine heart."

4. See iii. 14. Solomon's subsequent fall lends to these repeated warnings a special interest.

6. *at all turn*] Rather, "If ye shall wholly turn from following Me." (See 2 Chr. vii. 19.) The Israelites were not to be cut off, except for an entire defection.

8. The Hebrew text runs—"And this house shall be high: every one," &c. The meaning appears to be, "This house shall

be high" (i.e. conspicuous) "in its ruin as in its glory."

and shall hiss] In contempt. This expression first appears in the time of Hezekiah (2 Chr. xxix. 8; Mic. vi. 16). It is especially familiar to Jeremiah (xviii. 16, xix. 8, &c.).

10. The "twenty years" are to be counted from the fourth year of Solomon, the year when he commenced the building of the Temple. They are made up of the seven years employed in the work of the Temple (vi. 38), and the thirteen years during which Solomon was building his own house (vii. 1).

11. By the spirit, if not by the letter, of the Law, Solomon had no right to give away these cities, or any part of the inheritance of Israel (Lev. xxv. 13-34). But the exigencies of a worldly policy caused the requirements of the Law to be set aside.

12. *they pleased him not*] It is a reasonable conjecture that, when a question arose with respect to a cession of land, Hiram had cast his eyes on the bay or harbour of Acco, or Ptolemais, and was therefore the more disappointed when he received an inland tract of mountain territory.

- 13 not. And he said, What cities *are* these which thou hast given me, my brother? ¹And he called them the land of ¹Cabul unto this day. And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.
- ¹¹ ch. 5. 13. 15 ¶ And this *is* the reason of ²the levy which king Solomon raised: for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and ³Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and ⁴Hazor, and ⁵Megiddo, and ⁶Gezer. For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, ⁷and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife. And Solomon built Gezer, and ⁸Beth-horon the nether, and ⁹Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land, and all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for ¹⁰his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and ¹¹that which Solomon ¹²desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon,
- ¹ Josh. 19. 27.
² ver. 24.
³ Josh. 11. 1.
⁴ Josh. 12. 21.
⁵ Josh. 16. 10.
⁶ Judg. 1. 29.
⁷ Josh. 16. 10.
⁸ Josh. 10. 10.
⁹ 2 Chr. 8. 5.
¹⁰ Josh. 19. 44.
¹¹ 2 Chr. 8. 4.
¹² ch. 4. 20.
¹³ vcr. 1.

¹ That is, *Displeasing*, or, *Dirty*.

² Heb. *the desire of Solomon which he desired*.

13. Cabul is said to be a Phœnician word, and signified "displeasing;" (see marg.). There is some reason to believe that the cities thus despised by Hiram were restored to Solomon (2 Chr. viii. 2), and that Solomon rebuilt them and colonized them with Israelites.

14. *Hiram sent sixscore talents of gold*] Apparently, to show that, although disappointed, he was not offended. The sum sent was very large—above a million and a quarter of our money, according to one estimate of the weight of the Hebrew gold talent; or about 720,000*l.* according to the estimate adopted in Ex. xxxviii. 24-29 note. At any rate, it was more than equal to a sixth part of Solomon's regular revenue (x. 14).

15. *levy*] See marg. ref. note.

Millo] See 2 Sam. v. 9 note. The LXX. commonly render the word ἡ ἀκρά, "the citadel," and it may possibly have been the fortress on Mount Zion connected with the Maccabean struggles (1 Mac. iv. 41, xiii. 49-52). Its exact site has not been determined.

and the wall of Jerusalem] David's fortification (2 Sam. v. 9; 1 Chr. xi. 8) had been hasty, and had now—fifty years later—fallen into decay. Solomon therefore had to "repair the breaches of the city of David" (xi. 27).

Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer were three of the most important sites in the Holy Land. For the two first places, cp. marg. ref. and notes.

Gezer was a main city of the south. It was situated on the great maritime plain, and commanded the ordinary line of approach from Egypt, which was along this low region. The importance of Gezer appears from Josh. x. 33, xii. 12, &c. Its site is near Tell Jezer, and marked now by Abu Shusheh. Though within the lot of Ephraim (Josh. xvi. 3), and specially assigned to the Kohathite Levites (do. xxi. 21), it had never yet been conquered from the old inhabitants (marg. ref.), who con-

tinued to dwell in it till Solomon's time, and apparently were an independent people (v. 16).

Pharaoh took it before the marriage of Solomon with his daughter, and gave it "for a present"—i.e. for a dowry. Though in the East husbands generally pay for their wives, yet dower is given in some cases. Sargon gave Cilicia as a dowry with his daughter when he married her to Ambris king of Tubal: and the Persian kings seem generally to have given satrapial or other high offices as dowries to the husbands of their daughters.

17. *Beth-horon the nether*] See marg. ref. note.

18. *Tadmor*] The Hebrew text here has, as written, Tamor (or Tamar), and as read, Tadmor. That the latter place, or Palmyra, was meant appears, first, from the distinct statement of Chronicles (2 Chr. viii. 4) that Solomon built Tadmor, and the improbability that the fact would be omitted in Kings; secondly, from the strong likelihood that Solomon, with his wide views of commerce, would seize and fortify the Palmyrene Oasis; and thirdly, from the unanimity of the old Versions in rendering Tamar here by Tadmor. The probability seems to be that Tamar was the original name of the place, being the Hebrew word for "a palm," whence it is generally agreed that the town derived its name. Tadmor was a corrupt or dialectic variety of the word, which was adopted at the city itself, and prevailed over the original appellation. No reference is found to Tadmor in the Assyrian inscriptions, or in any classical writer before Pliny.

19. "The cities of store" contained provisions stored up for the troops (cp. 2 Chr. xxxii. 28). They seem to have been chiefly in the north—in Hamath (2 Chr. viii. 4) and Naphtali (do. xvi. 4). On the "cities for his chariots," see x. 26 note.

By "that which Solomon desired to build" (see marg.) seem to be intended "pleasaunces" in or near the capital, and

20 and in all the land of his dominion. ¶^a And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebu-
 21 sites, which were not of the children of Israel, their children^a that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy,^a upon those did
 22 Solomon levy a tribute of^b bondservice unto this day. But of the children of Israel did Solomon^c make no bondmen: but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his cap-
 23 tains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen. These were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought
 24 in the work. ¶ But^d Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto^e her house which Solomon had built for her:
 25 then did he build Millo. ¶ And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense^f upon the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the house.
 26 ¶ And^g king Solomon made a navy of ships in^h Ezion-geber, which is beside Elath, on theⁱ shore of the Red sea, in the land
 27 of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.
 28 And they came to^j Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.
CHAP. 10. AND when the^k queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, concerning the name of the LORD, she came^l to prove

2 Chr. 8.
7, &c.
Judg. 1.
21, 27, 29.
3.
Josh. 15. 63.
17. 12.
Judg. 1. 28.
See Gen. 9.
25, 26.
Ezra 2. 5, 7, 8.
Neh. 7. 57.
11. 3.
Lev. 25. 39.
See 2 Chr. 8. 10.
2 Chr. 8. 11.
2 Chr. 7. 8.
2 Sam. 6. 9.
ch. 11. 27.
2 Chr. 32. 5.
2 Chr. 8.
12, 13, 16.
2 Chr. 8.
17, 18.
Num. 33. 35.
Deut. 2. 8.
ch. 10. 11.
Gen. 10. 29.
2 Chr. 9.
1, &c.
Matt. 12. 42.
Luke 11. 31.
See Judg. 14. 12.
Prov. 1. 6.

¹ Heb. upon it.

² Heb. lip.

in the Lebanon range, built specially for the enjoyment of the king.

21. See v. 15 note.

22. Comparing this with v. 13, 14, it would seem that a modified service of forced labour for one-third of each year was not regarded as reducing those who were subject to it to the condition of bondmen.

23. five hundred and fifty] See v. 16 note.

24. Cp. marg. ref. Solomon was not satisfied that Pharaoh's daughter should remain in the palace of David, which was on Mount Zion, in the immediate vicinity of the Temple, because he regarded the whole vicinity of the Temple as made holy by the presence of the Ark of God. His own palace was on the other (western) hill, probably directly opposite to the Temple, the valley of the Tyropœum running between them.

25. three times] i.e. (see marg. ref.) the three solemn Feasts—the Feast of unleavened bread, the Feast of weeks, and the Feast of tabernacles.

did Solomon offer...and he burnt incense] Not with his own hand, but by his priests (viii. 6; 2 Chr. v. 7-14). In sacred, as in ordinary, history, men are said to do that which they cause to be done.

26. On Ezion-geber and Elath, see notes to marg. ref. As the entire tract about Elath (Akaba) is destitute of trees, it is conjectured that the wood of which Solomon built his fleet was cut in Lebanon,

floated to Gaza by sea, and thence conveyed across to Ezion-geber, at the head of the Elanitic Gulf, by land carriage. (Cp. 2 Chr. ii. 16.)

27. shipmen] See v. 6 note. With respect to the acquaintance of the Phœnicians with this particular sea, it may be observed that they are not unlikely to have had trading settlements there, as they had in the Persian Gulf, even at this early period. The commerce with Ophir was probably an established trade, previously either in their hands or in those of the Egyptians, when Solomon determined to have a share in it. The Egyptians had navigated the other arm of the Red Sea, and perhaps its lower parts, from a much more ancient period.

28. On Ophir, see marg. ref. note. Among the various opinions three predominate; all moderns, except a very few, being in favour of Arabia, India, or Eastern Africa. Arabia's claims are supported by the greatest number.

X. 1. Doubt has arisen whether the "queen of Sheba" was an Ethiopian or an Arabian princess. Both countries profess to have traditions on the subject connecting the queen of Sheba with their history; and in both countries, curiously enough, government by queens was common. But the claims of Arabia decidedly preponderate. The Arabian Sheba was the great spice country of the ancient world; whereas Ethiopia furnished no spices. The Arabian Sheba was an important kingdom. Sheba

- 2 him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, 3 she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her ¹questions: there was not *any* thing 4 hid from the king, which he told her not. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he 5 had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the ²attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his ³cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto 6 the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true ⁴report that I heard in mine 7 own land of thy ⁵acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and, behold, the half was not told me: ⁶thy wisdom and prosperity 8 exceedeth the fame which I heard. ⁷Happy *are* thy men, happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and 9 that hear thy wisdom. ⁸Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, ⁹to do judgment and justice. And she ¹⁰gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

• 1 Chr. 26. 16.

• Prov. 8. 34.

• ch. 5. 7.

/ 2 Sam. 8. 15.
Prov. 8. 15.
• Ps. 72. 10,
15.

¹ Heb. *words*.
² Heb. *standing*.
³ Or, *butlers*.

⁴ Heb. *word*.
⁵ Or, *sayings*.

⁶ Heb. *thou hast added wisdom and goodness to the fame*.

in Ethiopia was a mere town, subject to Meroë. And it may be doubted whether the Cushite Sheba of Scripture (Gen. x. 7) is not rather to be sought on the shores of the Persian Gulf (do. note), whence no one supposes "the queen of Sheba" to have come. If Ophir be placed in Arabia, there will be an additional reason for regarding Sheba as in the same quarter, because then Solomon's trade with that place will account for his fame having reached the Sabæan princess.

"The fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord," has been variously explained, and is confessedly very obscure. May it not mean what we should call "his religious fame," as distinct from his artistic, literary, military, or political fame—"his fame with respect to God and the things of God"—or, in other words, "his moral and religious wisdom?" (cp. v. 6).

hard questions) Or "riddles" (Judg. xiv. 12), though not exactly riddles in our sense. The Orientals have always been fond of playing with words and testing each other's wit and intelligence by verbal puzzles of various kinds. This spirit seems to have been particularly rife in Solomon's time, for Josephus records other encounters with Hiram of Tyre and another Tyrian called Abdemon.

2. See v. 10 note.

5. *and the meat of his table*] Cp. iv. 22, 23. The scene here described receives very

apt illustration from the Assyrian banquet scenes, where we have numerous guests sitting, dressed handsomely in fringed robes, with armlets upon their arms, and bracelets round their wrists, attendants standing behind them, and magnificent drinking-cups, evidently of a costly metal, in the hands of the guests, which are filled from a great wine-bowl at one end of the chamber.

and his ascent by which he went up] A rendering preferable to "the burnt-offering which he offered in." The "ascent" was probably a private way by which the king passed from his palace on the western hill, across the ravine (Tyropæum) and up the eastern hill, to the west side of the Temple area (cp. marg. ref.).

9. *Blessed be the LORD thy God*] This acknowledgment of Jehovah falls below the confessions of Hiram (2 Chr. ii. 12) and Cyrus (Ezr. i. 3). It does not imply more than an admission of His power as a local deity; viz. that He is the God of the Jews and of their country.

10. Strabo relates that the Sabæans were enormously wealthy, and used gold and silver in a most lavish manner in their furniture, their utensils, and even on the walls, doors, and roofs of their houses. That the gold of Sheba should be given to Solomon was prophesied by the writer of Ps lxxii. (see marg. ref.). The immense abundance of spices in Arabia, and especially in the Yemen or Sabæan country, is noted by

- 11 ¶^a And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, ^{a ch. 9. 27.}
 brought in from Ophir great plenty of ¹almug trees, and pre-
 12 cious stones. ²And the king made of the almug trees ²pillars ^{2 Chr. 9. 11.}
 for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also
 and psalteries for singers: there came no such ^aalmug trees, nor ^{a 2 Chr. 9. 10.}
 13 were seen unto this day. ¶ And king Solomon gave unto the
 queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that
 which Solomon gave her ⁴of his royal bounty. So she turned
 14 and went to her own country, she and her servants. ¶ Now the
 weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six
 15 hundred threescore and six talents of gold, beside that he had of
 the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants,
 and ⁵of all the kings of Arabia, and of the ⁵governors of the ^{2 Chr. 9. 24.}
 16 country. ¶ And king Solomon made two hundred targets of ^{Ps. 72. 10.}
 beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of gold went to one target.

¹ *almug trees*, 2 Chr. 2. 8.
 & 9. 10, 11.

² Or, rails.

³ Heb. *a prop.*

⁴ Heb. according to the

hand of king Solomon.

⁵ Or, captains.

many writers. According to Strabo, the spice-trade of Arabia was in the hands of two nations, the Sabæans and the Gerhmæans. The spices in which they dealt seem to have been only in part the produce of Arabia itself; some of the most important kinds, as the cinnamon and the cassia, must have been imported from India, since Arabia does not yield them. The chief precious stones which Arabia now yields are the onyx and the emerald. Anciently she is said to have produced other gems. Pearls, too, were readily procurable in Arabia from the Persian Gulf fishery.

11. *the navy of Hiram*] i.e. Solomon's navy in the Red Sea, which was chiefly manned by subjects of Hiram (see marg. ref.).

almug-trees] Probably the sandal-wood tree (*ptercarpus santalinus*). The wood is very heavy, hard, and fine grained, and of a beautiful garnet colour, which, according to the Rabbinical writers, was the colour of the algum. One of the names of the red sandal-wood, in its own native country (India) is *vaiguka*, a word of which *algum* is a natural corruption.

12. *pillars*] The Hebrew word signifies ordinarily a "prop" (marg.). It is generally supposed to mean in this place a "railing," or "balustrade," a sense which connects and harmonises the present passage with the parallel passage in Chronicles (marg. ref.), where Solomon is said to have made of the almug-wood "stairs" for the Temple and for his own house.

harps] The Jewish harp (*kinnor*) was of a triangular shape, and had ordinarily ten strings. It probably resembled the more ancient harp of the Assyrians, which was played with a plectrum, as was (ordinarily) the *kinnor*.

psalteries] The psaltery, or viol (*nebel*, Gr. *νάβλα*), was a stringed instrument played with the hand; perhaps a lyre, like

those on Hebrew coins, the sounding-board of which is shaped like a jug; or, perhaps, a sort of guitar, with a hollow jug-shaped body at the lower end.

14. *six hundred threescore and six talents of gold*] About 3,646,350*l.* of our money. Solomon's annual revenue exceeded that of Oriental empires very much greater in extent than his, and must have made him one of the richest, if not the very richest, of the monarchs of his time.

15. There is no mention in the original of "*spice merchants*." Two classes of traders are spoken of; but both expressions are general.

kings of Arabia] Rather, "kings of the mingled people" (cp. Jer. xxv. 24). These were probably tribes half Jewish, half Arabian, on the borders of the western desert. They are regarded as Arabs by the author of Chronicles (marg. ref.).

governors] The word used here is thought to be of Aryan origin. It appears to have been a title given by the Persians to petty governors, inferior to the great satraps of provinces. We find it borne by, among others, Tatnai (Ezr. v. 6), Zerubbabel (Hag. i. 1), and Nehemiah (Neh. v. 14). It can scarcely have been in use among the Jews so early as Solomon, and we must therefore suppose it to have been substituted by the writer of Kings for some corresponding Semitic title. The empire of Solomon was not a state governed from a single centre by an organisation of satrapies or provinces (iv. 21 note). But exceptionally, in some parts of the empire, the kings had been superseded by "governors" (cp. xx. 24).

16. The "targets" seem to have been long shields protecting the whole body, while the "shields" of the next verse were bucklers of a smaller size, probably round, and much lighter. They may be compared with the Assyrian long shield, and the ordinary Assyrian round shield. As the amount

- ^m ch. 14. 20. 17 And he made ^m three hundred shields of beaten gold ; three pound
ⁿ ch. 7. 2. of gold went to one shield : and the king put them in the ⁿ house
^o 2 Chr. 9. 17, &c. 18 of the forest of Lebanon. ¶ ^o Moreover the king made a great
19 throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. The throne
had six steps, and the top of the throne was round ¹ behind : and
there were ² stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two
20 lions stood beside the stays. And twelve lions stood there on
the one side and on the other upon the six steps : there was not
^p 2 Chr. 9. 20, &c. 21 the like made in any kingdom. ¶ ^p And all king Solomon's
drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of
the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold ; ^q none were of silver :
22 it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. For the
king had at sea a navy of ^r Tharshish with the navy of Hiram :
^q Gen. 10. 4. once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold,
² Car. 20. 36.

¹ Heb. on the hinder part thereof.

² Heb. hands.
³ Heb. so.

⁴ Or, there was no silver in them.

of gold used in each of the larger shields was only 600 shekels—worth from 650*l.* to 700*l.* of our money—and that used in the smaller ones was only half as much it is evident that the metal did not form the substance of the shields, but was laid as a coating or plating over them.

17. These shields, together with the 500 taken by David from Hadadezer (2 Sam. viii. 7) were hung round the outer walls of a building, reckoned as belonging to the "house of the Forest of Lebanon," but separate from it, and called sometimes "the Tower of David" (Cant. iv. 4), or from its use "the armoury" (do.; Is. xxii. 8). The practice of hanging shields outside walls for ornamentation seems to have existed at Tyre (Ezek. xxvii. 10, 11), Rome, Athens, and elsewhere. Traces of it are thought to be found in the Assyrian sculptures.

18. It is, on the whole, probable that the substance of the throne was wood, and that the ivory, cut into thin slabs, and probably carved in patterns, was applied externally as a veneer. This is found to have been the practice in Assyria. The gold was probably not placed over the ivory, but covered other parts of the throne.

19. Representations of thrones are frequent in the Egyptian and Assyrian sculptures. They have no steps up to them, but frequently stand upon square bases. The back appears to be flat at the top, not rounded. Assyrian thrones have "stays" or arms on either side, and they stand generally upon lion's feet. They are always accompanied by a footstool.

lions stood beside the stays The arms of Assyrian thrones are occasionally supported by figures of animals. The throne of Rameses II. at Medinet Abou has a sphinx at the side and a lion below the sphinx. The figure of the lion is naturally adopted by any imaginative race as an emblem of sovereignty. In the present case its adop-

tion seems to have grown directly out of the poetic imagery of inspired Prophets, who, living before the time of Solomon, had compared Israel (Num. xxiii. 24, xxiv. 9), and more particularly Judah (Gen. xlix. 9), to a lion. The "twelve lions" of r. 20 were probably intended to be emblematic of the twelve tribes. Josephus adds to the description of Solomon's throne here given, that the seat was supported by a golden ox or bull, with its head turned over its shoulder. As the lion was especially emblematic of Judah, so was the ox or bull of Ephraim. (Hos. iv. 16, x. 11; Jer. xxxi. 18, &c.)

20. Solomon's throne, as described, is certainly grander than any of which we have a representation, either in Assyria or Egypt. Much more, then, would it transcend the thrones in inferior kingdoms.

22. This is given as the reason of the great plentifulness of silver in the time of Solomon. The "navy of Tharshish" (not the same as the navy of Ophir, ix. 26) must therefore have imported very large quantities of that metal. Tharshish, or Tartessus, in Spain, had the richest silver mines known in the ancient world, and had a good deal of gold also; apes and ivory were produced by the opposite coast of Africa; and, if north Africa did not produce "peacocks," which is uncertain, she may have produced the birds called here *tukkiyim*, which some translate "parrots," others "guinea-fowl"—the latter being a purely African bird. The etymology of the Hebrew words here rendered "ivory," "apes," and "peacocks," is uncertain; but even if of Indian origin, the Jews may have derived their first knowledge of ivory, apes, and peacocks, through nations which traded with India, and may thus have got the words into their language long before the time of Solomon. The names once fixed would be retained, whatever the quarter whence the things were procured afterwards.

- 23 and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. ¶ So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.
- 24 And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom,
- 25 which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.
- 26 ¶ And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and
- 27 with the king at Jerusalem. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore trees that are in the vale, for abundance. ¶ And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the
- 29 king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all

¹ Or, elephants' teeth.

² Heb. sought the face of.

³ Heb. gave.

⁴ Heb. And the going forth

of the horses which was Solomon's.

* ch. 3. 12, 13.
& 4. 30.

* ch. 4. 26.
2 Chr. 1. 14.
& 9. 25.
Deut. 17. 16.
2 Chr. 1.
15-17.

* Deut. 17.
16.
2 Chr. 1. 16.
& 9. 24.
Ezek. 27. 7.

* Josh. 1. 4.
2 Kin. 7. 6.

23, 24. See marg. reff. By "all the earth" we are, of course, only to understand the kings or people of neighbouring nations.

25. his present] i.e. his tribute (iv. 21 note). A statement illustrated by Egyptian and Assyrian sculptures on slabs and obelisks. Tribute-bearers from the subject kings, bring not only the fixed rate of bullion, but a tribute in kind besides, consisting of the most precious products of their respective countries.

26. See iv. 26 note. Until the time of Solomon, war-chariots had not been in use among the Jews, except to a very small extent (1 Chr. xviii. 4). Hence, it was necessary for him to put himself on an equality in this respect with neighbouring powers.

cities for chariots] They were probably fortresses upon the borders of his territory, in which he maintained the standing army necessary for the support of his dominion.

27. made silver as stones] This strong hyperbole marks in the most striking way the great wealth and prosperity of the capital during Solomon's reign. The lavish expenditure which impoverished the provinces, and produced, or helped to produce, the general discontent that led to the outbreak under Jeroboam, enriched the metropolis, which must have profited greatly by the residence of the court, the constant influx of opulent strangers, and the periodical visits of all Israelites not hindered by some urgent reason at the great festivals.

The "sycomore-trees in the vale" (Shephelah) are mentioned also in 1 Chr. xxvii. 28. Like the olives and the vines, they were placed by David under a special overseer, on account of their value. The tree meant seems to be the sycomore proper, or "fig-mulberry," which is still common in

Palestine, and is highly esteemed both on account of its fruit and its timber.

28. The word translated "linen yarn" is thought now by Hebraists to mean "a troop" or "company." If the present reading is retained, they would translate the passage—"As for the bringing up of Solomon's horses out of Egypt, a band of the king's merchants fetched a band (or troop) of horses at a price." But the reading is very uncertain. The LXX. had before them a different one, which they render "and from Tekoa." Tekoa, the home of Amos (Am. i. 1), was a small town on the route from Egypt to Jerusalem, through which the horses would have naturally passed. The monuments of the 18th and of later dynasties make it clear that the horse, though introduced from abroad, became very abundant in Egypt. During the whole period of Egyptian prosperity the corps of chariots constituted a large and effective portion of the army. That horses were abundant in Egypt at the time of the Exodus is evident from Ex. ix. 3, xiv. 9, 23, 28; Deut. xvii. 16. That they continued numerous in later times appears from frequent allusions, both in the Historical Books of Scripture and in the Prophets, as 2 K. vii. 6, xviii. 24; Is. xxxvi. 9; Ezek. xvii. 15, &c. The monuments show that the horse was employed by the Egyptians in peace no less than in war, private persons being often represented as paying visits to their friends in chariots.

29. Taking the shekel at about three shillings of our money, six hundred silver shekels would be equal to about 90*l.*; and 150 shekels to 22*l.* 10*s.* Average price seems to be in each case intended; and we may account for the comparatively high price of the chariot by supposing that by "chariot" is intended the entire equipage, including car, harness, and trained horses, of which

the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring *them out* ¹by their means.

^a Neh. 13. 26.
^b Deut. 17. 17.

^c Ex. 34. 16.
Deut. 7. 3, 4.

^d Deut. 17. 17.
Neh. 13. 26.
^e ch. 8. 01.
^f ch. 9. 4.
^g ver. 33.
Judg. 2. 13.
2 Kin. 23. 13.

CHAP. 11. BUT ^aking Solomon loved ^bmany strange women, ²together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, 2 Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, ^c'Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: *for* surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: 3 Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives 4 turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, ^dthat his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his ^e'heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, ^fas *was* the 5 heart of David his father. For Solomon went after ^gAshtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after ^hMilcom the abomination

¹ Heb. by their hand.

² Or, beside.

³ Called *Molech*, ver. 7.

there would be two at least, if not three. The "horses" mentioned separately from the chariots are not chariot-horses, but chargers for the cavalry.

the kings of the Hittites] See 2 K. vii. 6 note. The kings intended were probably Solomon's vassals, whose armies were at his disposal if he required their aid.

XI. 1. In noticing successively Solomon's excessive accumulation of silver and gold (x. 14-25), his multiplication of horses (do. 26-29), and his multiplication of wives, the writer has in mind the warning of Moses against these three forms of princely ostentation, all alike forbidden to an Israelite monarch (marg. ref.).

Zidonians] i.e. Phœnician women. A tradition states that Solomon married a daughter of Hiram, king of Tyre.

2. *ye shall not go in unto them, &c.*] These words are not a quotation from the Pentateuch. They merely give the general meaning of the two passages prohibiting intermarriage with neighbouring idolaters (marg. ref.). Strictly speaking, the prohibition in the Law of intermarriage was confined to the Canaanitish nations. But the principle of the prohibition applied equally to the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, who all bordered on the Holy Land; and was so applied by Ezra (Ezr. ix. 1) and Nehemiah (Neh. xiii. 23).

3. These numbers seem excessive to many critics, and it must be admitted that history furnishes no parallel to them. In Cant. vi. 8 the number of Solomon's legitimate wives is said to be sixty, and that of his concubines eighty. It is, perhaps probable, that the text has in this place suffered corruption. For "700" we should perhaps read "70."

4. *old*] About fifty or fifty-five. From his age at his accession (ii. 2 note) he could not have been more than about sixty at his death.

The true nature of Solomon's idolatry

was neither complete apostasy—an apostasy from which there could be no recovery; nor a mere toleration, rather praiseworthy than blameable. Solomon did not ever openly or wholly apostatise. He continued his attendance on the worship of Jehovah, and punctually made his offerings three times a year in the Temple (ix. 25); but his heart was not "perfect" with God. The religious earnestness of his younger days was weakened by wealth, luxury, sensualism, an increasing worldliness leading him to worldly policy and latitudinarianism arising from contact with all the manifold forms of human opinion. His lapse into deadly sin was no doubt gradual. Partly from ostentation, partly from that sensualism which is the most common failing of Oriental monarchs, he established a harem on a grand and extraordinary scale. To gratify "strange women," i.e. foreigners, admitted either from worldly policy, or for variety's sake, he built magnificent temples to their false gods, right over against Jerusalem, as manifest rivals to "the Temple." He thus became the author of a syncretism, which sought to blend together the worship of Jehovah and the worship of idols—a syncretism which possessed fatal attractions for the Jewish nation. Finally, he appears himself to have frequented the idol temples (rv. 5 and 10), and to have taken part in those fearful impurities which constituted the worst horror of the idolatrous systems, thus practically apostatising, though theoretically he never ceased to hold that Jehovah was the true God.

5. *went after*] This expression is common in the Pentateuch, and always signifies actual idolatry (see Deut. xi. 28, xiii. 2, xxviii. 14, &c.).

For Ashtoreth, or Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians, see Ex. xxxiv. 13; Deut. xvi. 21 notes. On the tomb of a Phœnician king, discovered in 1855, on the site of

- 6 of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and ¹went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father. ²Then did Solomon build an high place for ³Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in ⁴the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.
- 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt in-
9 cense and sacrificed unto their gods. ¶ And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because ¹his heart was turned from the
- 10 LORD God of Israel, ²which had appeared unto him twice, and ³had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD com-
11 manded. Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this ²is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, ³I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.
- 12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.
- 13 ¶ Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give ¹one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jeru-
14 salem's sake ²which I have chosen. ¶ And the LORD ³stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he *was* of
15 the king's seed in Edom. For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to
16 bury the slain, ⁴after he had smitten every male in Edom; (for six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had

¹ Num. 33. 52.
² Num. 21. 29. Judg. 11. 24.
³ 2 Kin. 23. 13.
⁴ ver. 2, 3.
⁵ ch. 3. 5.
⁶ 9. 2.
⁷ ch. 6. 12.
⁸ 9. 6.
⁹ ver. 31.
ch. 12. 15, 16.
¹⁰ 2 Sam. 7. 15.
¹¹ Ps. 89. 33.
¹² ch. 12. 20.
¹³ Deut. 12. 11.
¹⁴ 1 Chr. 5. 26.
¹⁵ 2 Sam. 8. 14.
1 Chr. 18. 12, 13.
¹⁶ Num. 24. 19.
Deut. 20. 13.

¹ Heb. fulfilled not after, Num. 14. 24.

² Heb. is with thee.

Sidon, mention is made of a temple of Astarte there, which the monarch built or restored; and his mother is said to have been a priestess of the goddess.

Milcom or Molech (r. 7) are variants of the term ordinarily used for "king" among the Semitic races of Western Asia, which appears in *Melkarth* (Phœnic.), *Alimelch* (Heb.), *Andrammelek* (Assyr.), *Abd-ul-Malik* (Arab.), &c. On the character and worship of Molech, see Lev. xx. 2-5 note.

7. Chemosh (Num. xxi. 29 note), seems to have been widely worshipped in Western Asia. His name occurs frequently on the "Moabite-Stone." Car-Chemish, "the fort of Chemosh," a great city of the northern Hittites, must have been under his protection. In Babylon he seems to have been known as Chomus-belus, or Chemosh-Bel.

the hill] Olivet. At present the most southern summit only (the *Mons Offensionis*) is pointed out as having been desecrated by the idol sanctuaries: but the early Eastern travellers tell us that in their time the most northern suburb was believed to have been the site of the high place of Chemosh, the southern one that of Molech only.

13. *one tribe*] i.e. (marg. ref.) the tribe of Judah. Benjamin was looked upon as absorbed in Judah, so as not to be really a tribe in the same sense as the others. Still, in memory of the fact that the existing tribe of Judah was a double one (xii. 21), the prophet Ahijah tore his garment into

twelve parts, and kept back two from Jeroboam (rr. 30, 31).

14. The writer has reserved for this place the various troubles of Solomon's reign, not allowing them to interrupt his previous narrative. He has, consequently, not followed chronological order. Hadad's (v. 23) and Rezon's opposition belong to the early years of Solomon's reign.

Hadad was a royal title (perhaps, the Syriac name for "the Sun") both in Syria and in Idumæa (cp. Gen. xxxvi. 35; 1 Chr. i. 51).

15. The verse gives certain additional particulars of David's conquest of Edom (marg. ref.). Joab was left, or sent, to complete the subjugation of the country, with orders to exterminate all the grown male inhabitants. It was not very often that David acted with any extreme severity in his wars; but he may have considered himself justified by policy, as he certainly was by the letter of the Law (Deut. xx. 13), in adopting this fierce course against Edom. *was in Edom*] Or, according to another reading, "*smote*" Edom.

the slain] Probably the Israelites who had fallen in the struggle. Translate, "when... Joab was gone up to bury the slain, and had smitten every male," &c.

16. *every male in Edom*] i.e. every male whom he could find. As did Hadad and his company (v. 17), so others would escape in various directions. The Edomite nation was not destroyed on the occasion.

- 17 cut off every male in Edom :) that Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt;
 18 Hadad being yet a little child. And they arose out of Midian, and came to Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him
 19 land. And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister
 20 of Tahpenes the queen. And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of
 21 Pharaoh. ²And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, ¹Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, ³Nothing: howbeit let me go in
 23 any wise. ¶ And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord ⁴Hadadezer king of
 24 Zobah: and he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, ⁵when David slew them of Zobah: and they went
 25 to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus. And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad *did*: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned
 26 over Syria. ¶ And ⁶Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he ⁷lifted up his hand against the king.
 27 And this *was* the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: *"Solomon built Millo, and ⁸repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he ⁹was industrious, he made him ruler over all the ¹⁰charge of the house*

¹ 1 Kin. 2.
10, 34.

² 2 Sam. 8.3.

³ 2 Sam. 8.3.
& 10. 8, 18.

⁴ ch. 12. 2.
2 Chr. 13. 6.

⁵ 2 Sam. 20.
21.

⁶ ch. 9. 15.

¹ Heb. *send me away.*
² Heb. *Not.*

³ Heb. *closed.*

⁴ Heb. *did work.*
⁵ Heb. *burden.*

18. *Midian*] A town in the south of Judah. Paran is the desert tract immediately to the south of Judæa, the modern desert of et-Tih.

Pharaoh] King of the twenty-first (Tanite) dynasty; probably he was Pausennes I., Manetho's second king. It appears to have been the policy of the Pharaohs about this time to make friends and contract alliances with their eastern neighbours.

21. That Hadad should wait for the death of Joab before requesting leave to return to Idumæa shows how terrible an impression had been made by the severe measures which that commander had carried out twenty-five or thirty years previously (v. 16). The inability of refugees to depart from an Oriental court without the king's leave, and his unwillingness ordinarily to grant leave, are illustrated by many passages in the history of Persia.

23. *Rezon*] Possibly the same as the Hezion of xv. 18; but probably one who interrupted the royal line of the Damascene Hadads, which was restored after his death.

We may arrange the Damascus-kings of this period as follows:—

Hadadezer (or Hadad I.), ab. b.c. 1040 (conquered by David).

Rezon (usurper) contemporary with Solomon.

Hezion (Hadad II.) " Rehoboam.

Tabrimon (Hadad III.) " Abijam.

Ben-hadad (Hadad IV.) " Asa.

24. and (they) reigned] A very slight emendation gives the sense, "they made him king at Damascus."

26. *Zereda*] See Judg. vii. 22.

lifted up his hand against the king] i.e. "he rebelled." Cp. marg. ref.

27. Millo was probably fortified in Solomon's twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth year.

28. *a mighty man of valour*] Here "a man of strength and activity." It is a vague term of commendation, the exact force of which must be fixed by the context. See Ruth ii. 1; 1 Sam. ix. 1, &c.

Solomon made Jeroboam superintendent of all the forced labour ("the charge") exacted from his tribe—the tribe of Ephraim—during the time that he was building

29 of Joseph. And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam
went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet ^aAhijah the Shilonite
found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new
30 garment; and they two *were* alone in the field: and Ahijah
caught the new garment that *was* on him, and *rent it in* twelve
31 pieces: and he said to Jeroboam, Take these ten pieces: for
thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the
kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to
32 thee: (but he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake,
and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all
33 the tribes of Israel:) ^abecause that they have forsaken me, and
have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Che-
mosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the
children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do *that*
which is right in mine eyes, and to *keep* my statutes and my
34 judgments, as *did* David his father. Howbeit I will not take the
whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all
the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose,
35 because he kept my commandments and my statutes: but ^bI
will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto
36 thee, *even* ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe,
that ^cDavid my servant may have a ¹light *always* before me in
Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name
37 there. And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to
38 all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And
it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee,
and wilt walk in my ways, and do *that is right* in my sight, to
keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant
did; that ^dI will be with thee, and ¹build thee a sure house, as
39 I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. And I will
40 for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever. Solomon
sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and

^a ch. 14. 2.
^b See
1 Sam. 15.
27.
& 24. 5.
^c ver. 11, 13.
^d ver. 5, 6, 7.
^a ch. 12. 10,
17.
^b ch. 15. 4.
2 Kin. 8. 19.
1's. 132. 17.
^c ch. 1. 37.
^d 2 Sam. 7.
11, 27.

¹ Heb. *lamp, or, candle.*

Millo and fortifying the city of Jerusalem (ix. 15).

29. *at that time*] Probably after Jeroboam's return from Egypt (see v. 40).

the Shilonite]. An inhabitant of Shiloh in Mount Ephraim, the earliest and most sacred of the Hebrew sanctuaries (Josh. xviii. 10 : Judg. xviii. 31 : 1 Sam. iv. 3. &c.)

30. The first instance of the "acted parable." Generally this mode was adopted upon express divine command (see Jer. xiii. 1-11; Ezek. iii. 1-3). A connexion may be traced between the type selected and the words of the announcement to Solomon (*rev.* 11-13. Cp. 1 Sam. xv. 26-28).

34. Translate—"Howbeit I will not take ought of the kingdom out of his hand." The context requires this sense.

36. that David may have a light] Cp. marg. refl. The exact meaning of the expression is doubtful. Perhaps the best explanation is, that "light" here is taken as the essential feature of a continuing home.

38. See marg. reff. To "build a sure house," or "give a house," is to give a continuity of offspring, and so secure the per-

petuity of a family. The promise, it will be observed, is conditional; and as the condition was not complied with, it did not take effect (see xiv. 8-14). The entire house of Jeroboam was destroyed by Baasha (xv. 29).

39. *but not for ever*] David had been distinctly promised that God should never fail his seed, whatever their shortcomings (Ps. lxxxix. 28-37). The fulfilment of these promises was seen, partly in the Providence which maintained David's family in a royal position till Zerubbabel, but mainly in the preservation of his seed to the time fixed for the coming of Christ, and in the birth of Christ—the Eternal King—from one of David's descendants.

40. Cp. v. 26. The announcement of Ahijah was followed within a little while by rebellion on the part of Jeroboam. As Solomon's lustre faded, as his oppression became greater and its objects more selfish, and as a prospect of deliverance arose from the personal qualities of Jeroboam (v. 28), the tribe of Ephraim to which he belonged, again aspired after its old position (see Josh.

- fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt
 " 2 Chr. 9. 41 until the death of Solomon. ¶ And "the rest of the 'acts of
 23. Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not
 " 2 Chr. 9.30. 42 written in the book of the acts of Solomon? "And the 'time
 " 2 Chr. 9.31. 43 years. "And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in
 " Matt. 1. 7, the city of David his father: and "Rehoboam his son reigned in
 called his stead.
 Roboam.
 " 2 Chr. 10. CHAP. 12. AND "Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were
 1, &c. 2 come to Shechem to make him king. ¶ And it came to pass,
 " ch. 11. 26. when "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in "Egypt,
 " ch. 11. 40. heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon,
 3 and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) that they sent and called him.
 And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and
 " 1 Sam. 8. 4 spake unto Rehoboam, saying, Thy father made our "yoke
 11—18. grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy
 ch. 4. 7. father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and

¹ Or, words, or, things.

² Heb. days.

xvii. 14 note). Jeroboam, active, energetic, and ambitious, placed himself at their head. The step proved premature. The power of Solomon was too firmly fixed to be shaken; and the hopes of the Ephraimites had to be deferred till a fitter season.

The exact date of Jeroboam's flight into Egypt cannot be fixed. It was certainly not earlier than Solomon's twenty-fourth year, since it was after the building of Millo (v. 27). But it may have been several years later.

Shishak] This king is the first Pharaoh mentioned in Scripture who can be certainly identified with any known Egyptian monarch. He is the Sheshonk (Sheshonk I.) of the monuments, and the Sesonchosis of Manetho. The Egyptian date for his accession is B.C. 980 or 933, which synchronizes, according to the ordinary Hebrew reckoning, with Solomon's thirty-second or thirty-fifth year. Sheshonk I. has left a record of his expedition against Judah, which accords well with what is related of Shishak (xiv. 25, 26; 2 Chr. xii. 2-4).

41. *the book of the acts of Solomon*] See marg. ref. and Introd. p. 265.

42. Josephus gave Solomon a reign of eighty years, either because he wished to increase the glory of his country's greatest king, or through his having a false reading in his copy of the LXX. Version. It is, no doubt, remarkable that the three successive kings, Saul, David, and Solomon, should have each reigned forty years (Acts xiii. 21; 2 Sam. v. 4, 5); but such numerical coincidences occur from time to time in exact history.

XII. 1. The first step taken by the new king was a most judicious one. If anything could have removed the disaffection of the Ephraimites, and caused them to submit to the ascendancy of Judah, it would have been the honour done to their capital by its

selection as the scene of the coronation. Shechem (now *Nablous*) lay on the flank of Mount Gerizim, directly opposite to Mount Ebal, in a position second to none in all Palestine. Though Abimelech had destroyed the place (Judg. ix. 45), it had probably soon risen again, and was once more a chief city, or perhaps the chief city, of Ephraim. Its central position made it a convenient place for the general assembly of the tribes, as it had been in the days of Joshua (Josh. viii. 30-35, xxiv. 1-28); and this would furnish an additional reason for its selection.

2. *heard of it*] i.e. of the death of Solomon and accession of Rehoboam. This would be more clear without the division into chapters; which division, it must be remembered, is without authority.

dwelt in Egypt] By a change of the pointing of one word, and of one letter in another, the Hebrew text here will read as in 2 Chr. x. 2, "returned out of Egypt; and they sent and called him."

In the LXX. Version the story of Jeroboam is told in two different ways. The general narrative agrees closely with the Hebrew text; but an insertion into the body of ch. xii.—remarkable for its minuteness and circumstantiality—at once deranges the order of the events, and gives to the history in many respects a new aspect and colouring. This section of the Septuagint, though regarded by some as thoroughly authentic, absolutely conflicts with the Hebrew text in many important particulars. In its general outline it is wholly irreconcilable with the other narrative; and, if both stood on the same footing, and we were free to choose between them, there could be no question about preferring the history as given in our Version.

4. The complaint was probably twofold. The Israelites no doubt complained in part of the heavy weight of taxation laid upon

5 we will serve thee. And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed. 6 ¶ And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do 7 ye advise that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, 'If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to 8 them, then they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and 9 which stood before him: and he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? 10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little 11 finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will 12 chastise you with scorpions. ¶ So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, 13 saying, Come to me again the third day. And the king answered the people 'roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel 14 that they gave him; and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, 15 but I will chastise you with scorpions. Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD

* 2 Chr. 10. 7.
Prov. 15. 1.

1 ver. 24.
Judg. 14. 4.
2 Chr. 10. 15.
& 22. 7.
& 25. 20.

1 Heb. *hardly*.

them for the maintenance of the monarch and his court (iv. 19-23). But their chief grievance was the forced labour to which they had been subjected (v. 13, 14, xi. 28). Forced labour has been among the causes leading to insurrection in many ages and countries. It helped to bring about the French Revolution, and it was for many years one of the principal grievances of the Russian serfs. Jeroboam's position as superintendent of the forced labours of the tribe of Ephraim (xi. 28) revealed to him the large amount of dissatisfaction which Solomon's system had produced, and his contemplated rebellion in Solomon's reign may have been connected with this standing grievance.

6. *the old men, that stood before Solomon his father*] Perhaps "the princes" of iv. 2. Solomon placed great value upon good advisers (Prov. xi. 14, xv. 22, xxiv. 6).

7. The advice was not that the king should permanently resign the office of ruler, but that he should *for once* be ruled by his people.

8. The age of Rehoboam at his accession is an interesting and difficult question. According to the formal statement of the present text of xiv. 21, 2 Chr. xii. 13, he had

reached the mature age of forty-one years, and would therefore be unable to plead youth as an excuse for his conduct. The general narrative, however, seems to assume that he was quite a young man (cp. 2 Chr. xiii. 7). Perhaps the best way of removing the whole difficulty would be to read in the above text "twenty-one" for "forty-one." The corruption is one which might easily take place, if letters were used for numerals.

My little finger, &c.] i.e. "You shall find my hand heavier on you than my father's—as much heavier as if my little finger were thicker than his loins."

11. *scorpions*] By this word some understand whips having leaden balls at the ends of their lashes with hooks projecting from them; others the thorny stem of the eggplant, or "the scorpion plant." But it seems best to regard the expression as a figure of speech.

15. *The cause was from the LORD*] i.e. "the turn of events was from the Lord." Human passions, anger, pride, and insolence, worked out the accomplishment of the Divine designs. Without interfering with man's free will, God guides the course of events, and accomplishes His purposes.

- ⁹ ch. 11. 11, 31. ⁹ spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.
¹⁰ 2 Sam. 20. 1. 16 ¶ So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, ¹⁰ What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel
¹¹ ch. 11. 13, 36. 17 departed unto their tents. But ¹¹ as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over
¹² ch. 4. 6. & 5. 14. 18 them. ¶ Then king Rehoboam ¹² sent Adoram, who *was* over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam ¹³ made speed to get him up to his
¹⁴ 2 Kin. 17. 21. 19 chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. So ¹⁴ Israel ¹⁵ rebelled against the house of David unto this day. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the
¹⁶ ch. 11. 13, 32. 21 tribe of Judah ¹⁶ only. ¶ And when ¹⁷ Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of
¹⁸ 2 Chr. 11. 1.

¹ Heb. *strengthened himself*.

² Or, *fell away*.

16. See marg. ref. The words breathe unmistakably the spirit of tribal jealousy and dislike (xi. 40 note).

now see to thine own house, David] i.e. "Henceforth, house of David, look after thine own tribe, Judah, only." It is not a threat of war, but a warning against interference.

17. *Israel, &c.]* The Israelites proper, or members of the other tribes, who happened to be settled within the limits of the land of Judah. These Israelites quietly submitted to Rehoboam. "Israel" through this chapter, and throughout the rest of Kings, designates ordinarily "the ten tribes," and is antithetical to "Judah."

18. Adoram has been identified with Adoniram (marg. ref.), and even with the Adoram of 2 Sam. xx. 24. But it is highly improbable that the same person was chief superintendent of the forced labours during the whole of Solomon's long reign, and also during a part of David's and Rehoboam's. We may therefore conclude that the three names mark three distinct persons, perhaps of the same family, who were respectively contemporary with the three kings. Adoram was chosen, as best acquainted with the hardships whereof the rebels complained, to arrange some alleviation of their burthens.

19. *unto this day]* This expression shows that the writer, who lived during the Captivity, and consequently long after the rebellion of Israel had come to an end, is embodying in his history the exact words of an ancient document. His source, whatever it was, appears to have been also followed by the writer of Chronicles. (See 2 Chr. x. 19.)

20. The first act of the Israelites, on learning what had occurred at Shechem, was to bring together the great "congregation" of the people (cp. Judg. xx. 1), in

order that, regularly and in solemn form, the crown might be declared vacant, and a king elected in the room of the monarch whose authority had been thrown off. The congregation selected Jeroboam. The rank, the talent, and the known energy of the late exile, his natural hostility to the house of Solomon, his Ephraimite descent, his acquaintance with the art of fortification, and the friendly relations subsisting between him and the great Egyptian king, pointed him out as the fittest man for the vacant post. If (according to the LXX.) Shishak had not only protected him against Solomon, but also given him an Egyptian princess, sister to his own queen, in marriage, his position must have been such that no other Israelite could have borne comparison with him. Again, the prophecy of Ahijah would have been remembered by the more religious part of the nation, and would have secured to Jeroboam their adhesion; so that every motive, whether of policy or of religion, would have united to recommend the son of Nebat to the suffrages of his countrymen.

21. The adhesion of Benjamin to Judah at this time comes upon us as a surprise. By blood Benjamin was far more closely connected with Ephraim than with Judah. All the traditions of Benjamin were antagonistic to Judah, and hitherto the weak tribe had been accustomed to lean constantly on its strong northern neighbour. But it would seem that, in the half-century which had elapsed since the revolt of Sheba, the son of Bichri (2 Sam. xx. 1), the feelings of the Benjamites had undergone a complete change. This is best accounted for by the establishment of the religious and political capital at Jerusalem, on the border line of the two tribes (Josh. xv. 8, xviii. 16), whence it resulted that the new metropolis stood partly within the territory of either, and was in a

- Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.
- 22 But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, ^{2 Chr. 12. 6-8, 15.}
- 23 saying, Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to
- 24 the remnant of the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; ^{2 ver. 15.} for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and
- 25 returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD. ¶ Then Jeroboam ²built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; ^{2 See Judg. 9. 46.}
- 26 and went out from thence, and built ²Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of
- 27 David: if this people ²go up to do sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn
- again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.
- 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and ²made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: ^{2 Kin. 10. 29.} behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up ^{Ex. 32. 4, 8.}

certain sense common to both. One of the gates of Jerusalem was "the high gate of Benjamin" (Jer. xx. 2); and probably Benjamites formed a considerable part of the population. The whole tribe also, we may well believe, was sincerely attached to the Temple worship, in which they could participate far more freely and more constantly than the members of remoter tribes, and to which the habits of forty years had now accustomed them.

On the number of the Israelites, see notes on Ex. xii. 37, and 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. The number mentioned here is moderate, compared with the numbers given both previously and subsequently (2 Chr. xiii. 3, xvii. 14-18).

22. Shemaiah was the chief Prophet in Judah during the reign of Rehoboam, as Ahijah was in Israel. See marg. ref.

23. *the remnant*] i.e. "the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah" (v. 17 note).

25. *built Shechem*] In the sense of "enlarged and fortified." See Dan. iv. 30. The first intention of Jeroboam seems to have been to make Shechem his capital, and therefore he immediately set about its fortification. So also he seems to have fortified Peniel for the better security of his Trans-Jordanic possessions (marg. ref.).

26. Jeroboam's fear was lest a reaction should set in, and a desire for reunion manifest itself. He was not a man content to remain quiet, trusting simply to the promise made him (xi. 38). Hence he gave way to the temptation of helping forward the plans of Providence by the crooked devices of a merely human policy. His measures, like all measures which involve a dereliction of principle, brought certain

evils in their train, and drew down Divine judgment on himself. But they fully secured the object at which he aimed. They prevented all healing of the breach between the two kingdoms. They made the separation final. They produced the result that not only no reunion took place, but no symptoms of an inclination to reunite ever manifested themselves during the whole period of the double kingdom.

27. *kill me*] In case his subjects desired a reconciliation with Rehoboam, Jeroboam's death would at once facilitate the reestablishment of a single kingdom, and obtain favour with the legitimate monarch. (Cp. 2 Sam. iv. 7.)

28. The "calves of gold" were probably representations of the cherubic form, imitations of the two Cherubim which guarded the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. But being unauthorised copies, set up in places which God had not chosen, and without any Divine sanction, the sacred writers call them "calves." They were not mere human figures with wings, but had at any rate the head of a calf or ox. [Hence, some attribute this calf-worship entirely to Assyrian and Phœnician influence.] Jeroboam, in setting them up, was probably not so much influenced by the Apis-worship of Egypt, as (1) by a conviction that the Israelites could not be brought to attach themselves to any worship which did not present them with sensible objects to venerate; (2) by the circumstance that he did not possess any of the old objects of reverence, which had been concentrated at Jerusalem; and (3) by the fact that he could plead for his "calves" the authority of so great a name as Aaron (marg. ref.).

* Gen. 28. 19.
 v Judg. 18.
 29.
 * ch. 13. 34.
 2 Kin. 17. 21.
 * ch. 13. 32.
 2 Num. 3. 10.
 2 Kin. 17. 32.
 Ezek. 44. 7, 8.
 * Lev. 23.
 33. 34.
 Num. 29. 12.
 ch. 8. 2, 5.
 * Amos 7. 13.

* Num. 15.
 39.

/ ch. 13. 1.

* 2 Kin. 23.

17.

* ch. 12. 32,

33.

29 out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in *Beth-el, and
 30 the other put he in *Dan. And this thing became *a sin: for
 31 the people went to worship before the one, *even* unto Dan. And
 he made an *house of high places, ^band made priests of the
 32 lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And
 Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth
 day of the month, like unto *the feast that *is* in Judah, and he
 33 offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, ²sacrificing unto
 the calves that he had made: ^dand he placed in Beth-el the
 priests of the high places which he had made. So he ³offered
 upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of
 the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had ^edevised of
 his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel:
 and he offered upon the altar, ^fand ^gburnt incense.

CHAP. 13. AND, behold, there ^hcame a man of God out of Judah
 by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el: ^band Jeroboam stood by

¹ Or, went up to the altar, &c.

² Or, to sacrifice.

³ Or, went up to the altar, &c.

⁴ Heb. to burn incense.

29. In the first place, Jeroboam consulted the convenience of his subjects, who would thus in no case have very far to go in order to reach one or the other sanctuary. Further, he avoided the danger of reminding them continually that they had no ark—a danger which would have been imminent, had the two cherubs been placed together in one shrine.

He selected Bethel (in the south) for one of his seats of worship, on account of its pre-eminent sanctity. (See marg. ref.; Judg. xx. 26-28; 1 Sam. vii. 16.)

The north of Palestine did not furnish a spot possessing an equally sacred character, but still Dan had to some extent the character of a "holy city" (marg. ref.).

30. *this thing became a sin*] i.e. this act of Jeroboam's became an occasion of sin to the people. The author perhaps wrote the following words thus: "The people went to worship before the one to Bethel and before the other to Dan."

31. *he made an house of high places*] i.e. "He built a temple, or sanctuary, at each of the two cities where the calves were set up." The writer uses the expression "house of high places" in contempt, meaning that the buildings were not real temples, or houses of God, like that at Jerusalem, but only on a par with the temples upon high places which had long existed in various parts of the land.

made priests of the lowest of the people] More correctly, "from all ranks of the people." That the Levites did not accept Jeroboam's innovations, and transfer their services to his two sanctuaries, must have been the consequence of their faithful attachment to the true worship of Jehovah. In all probability Jeroboam confiscated the Levitical lands within his dominions for the benefit of the new priestly order (2 Chr. xi. 13, 14).

32. *a feast*] Intended as a substitute for the Feast of Tabernacles (marg. ref. c). It may also have assumed the character of a feast of dedication, held at the same time, after the example of Solomon (viii. 2). His object in changing the month from the seventh to the eighth, and yet keeping the day of the month, is not clear. Perhaps it was on account of the later vintage of the more northern regions. It is remarkable that Josephus places the scene in the seventh month. He therefore was not aware that the people of Israel kept the feast of Tabernacles a month later than their brethren of Judah. The expression "he offered upon the altar" (see marg. and Ex. xx. 26) shows that Jeroboam himself officiated as priest, and offered this sacrifice—at Bethel, not at Dan; where it is possible that the priests descended from Jonathan, the son of Gershom and grandson of Moses, undertook the services (Judg. xviii. 30 note).

33. This verse belongs to ch. xiii. rather than to ch. xii., being intended as an introduction to what follows.

which he had devised of his own heart] The entire system of Jeroboam receives its condemnation in these words. His main fault was that he left a ritual and a worship where all was divinely authorised, for ceremonies and services which were wholly of his own devising. Not being a Prophet, he had no authority to introduce religious innovations. Not having received any commission to establish new forms, he had no right to expect that any religious benefit would accrue from them. (See v. 26 note.)

XIII. 1. Rather, "in the word of the Lord." The meaning seems to be, not merely that the Prophet was bid to come, but that he came in the strength and power of God's word, a divinely inspired messenger. (Cp. xv. 2, 5, 32.)

by the altar] "On the altar;" i.e. on the

2 the altar ¹to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, 'Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. And he gave ^aa sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. ¶ And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. And the king answered and said unto the man of God, 'Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought ²the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before. And the king said unto the man of God, come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. And the man of God said unto the king, ³If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: for so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, ⁴Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. So he went another way, and re-

^c 2 Kin. 23. 15-18.

^d John 2. 13. 1 Cor. 1. 22.

^e Ex. 8. 8.

^f 9. 29.

^g 10. 17.

Num. 21. 7.

Acts 8. 24.

Jam. 5. 16.

^h 1 Sam. 9. 7.

2 Kin. 5. 15.

ⁱ So Num.

22. 18.

^j 24. 13.

^k 1 Cor. 5. 11.

¹ Or, to offer.

² Heb. the face of the LORD.

ledge, or platform, half-way up the Altar, whereupon the officiating priest always stood to sacrifice. Cp. xii. 32 note.

2. *a child shall be born... Josiah by name*] Divine predictions so seldom descend to such particularity as this, that doubts are entertained, even by orthodox theologians, with respect to the actual mention of Josiah's name by a Prophet living in the time of Jeroboam. Only one other instance that can be considered parallel occurs in the whole of Scripture—the mention of Cyrus by Isaiah. Of course no one who believes in the Divine foreknowledge can doubt that God could, if He chose, cause events to be foretold minutely by his Prophets; but certainly the general law of his Providence is, that He does not do so. If this law is to be at any time broken through, it will not be capriciously. Here it certainly does not appear what great effect was to be produced by the mention of Josiah's name so long before his birth; and hence a doubt arises whether we have in our present copies the true original text. The sense is complete without the words "Josiah by name;" and these words, if originally a marginal note, may easily have crept into the text by the mistake of a copyist. It is remarkable that, where this narrative is again referred to in Kings (marg. ref.), there is no allusion to the fact that the man of God had prophesied of Josiah *by name*.

3. *he gave a sign*] A sign of this kind—an immediate prophecy to prove the Divine character of a remote prophecy—had scarcely been given before this. In the later history, however, such signs are not unfrequent (cp. 2 K. xix. 29; Is. vii. 14-16). *the ashes... shall be poured out*] i.e. "The half-burnt remains of the offerings shall be ignominiously spilled upon the ground."

5. We need not suppose a complete shattering of the altar, but rather the appearance of a crack or fissure in the fabric, which, extending from top to bottom, caused the embers and the fragments of the victims to fall till they reached the ground.

7. *I will give thee a reward*] It was customary to honour a Prophet with a gift, if he performed any service that was requested at his hands (see marg. ref.).

9. *Eat no bread, nor drink water*] The reason of the command is evident. The man of God was not to accept the hospitality of any dweller at Bethel, in order to show in a marked way, which men generally could appreciate, God's abhorrence of the system which Jeroboam had "devised of his own heart."

nor turn again by the same way that thou camest] This command seems to have been given simply to test the obedience of the Prophet by laying him under a positive as well as a moral obligation.

11 turned not by the way that he came to Beth-el. ¶ Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; and his ¹sons came and told him, all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them 12 they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man 13 of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he 14 rode thereon, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, *Art* thou the man 15 of God that camest from Judah? And he said, *I am*. Then he 16 said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, [†] I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither 17 will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: for [‡] it was said to me [‡] by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way 18 that thou camest. He said unto him, *I am* a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may 19 eat bread and drink water. *But* he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. 20 ¶ And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of 21 the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which 22 the LORD thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the [¶] place, of the which *the LORD* did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water: thy 23 carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers. ¶ And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, *to wit*, for the prophet 24 whom he had brought back. And when he was gone, [‡] a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the 25 carcase. And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they

† ver. 8. 9.

‡ ch. 20. 35.
1 Thess. 4.
15.

¶ ver. 9.

‡ ch. 20. 36.

¹ Heb. *son*.² Heb. *a word was*.

11. The truly pious Israelites quitted their homes when Jeroboam made his religious changes, and, proceeding to Jerusalem, strengthened the kingdom of Rehoboam (2 Chr. x. 16, 17). This "old prophet" therefore, who, without being infirm in any way, had remained under Jeroboam, and was even content to dwell at Bethel—the chief seat of the new worship—was devoid of any deep and earnest religious feeling.

14. *under an oak*] Literally, "under the oak," or "the terebinth-tree." There was a single well-known tree of the kind, standing by itself in the vicinity of Bethel, which the author supposed his readers to be acquainted with.

18. *But he lied unto him*] It is always to be remembered that the prophetic gift

might co-exist with various degrees of moral imperfection in the person possessing it. Note especially the case of Balaam.

21. *Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD*] It was his duty not to have suffered himself to be persuaded. He should have felt that his obedience was being tried, and should have required, ere he considered himself released, *the same, or as strong, evidence*, as that on which he had received the obligation. Disobedience to certain positive commands of God, was one which it was at this time very important to punish signally, since it was exactly the sin of Jeroboam and his adherents.

22. On the anxiety of the Hebrews to be buried with their fathers, see Gen. xlvii. 30, xlix. 29, l. 25; 2 Sam. xix. 37, &c.

- 26 came and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt. And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard *thereof*, he said, *It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath ¹torn him, and slain him, according to*
 27 *the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him. And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him.*
 28 And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten
 29 the carcase, nor ²torn the ass. And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to
 30 bury him. And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they
 31 mourned over him, *saying, "Alas, my brother! And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, "When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the*
 32 *man of God is buried; ³lay my bones beside his bones: ⁴for the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places which*
 33 *are in the cities of ⁵Samaria, shall surely come to pass. ¶ After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but ⁶made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: who-soever would, he ⁷consecrated him, and he became one of the*
 34 *priests of the high places. ⁸And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even ⁹to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.*

¹ Heb. *broken*.² Heb. *broken*.³ Heb. *returned and made*.⁴ Heb. *filled h's hand*, Lev. 8. 25.⁵ Jer. 22. 19.⁶ 2 Kin. 23.⁷ ver. 2.⁸ 2 Kin. 23.⁹ 16, 19.¹⁰ See ch. 10.¹¹ 24.¹² ch. 12. 31,¹³ 32.¹⁴ 2 Chr. 11. 15.¹⁵ ch. 12. 30.¹⁶ ch. 15. 20.

23. *the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass*] These strange circumstances were of a nature to call men's attention to the matter, and cause the whole story to be bruited abroad. By these means an incident, which Jeroboam would have wished hushed up, became no doubt the common talk of the whole people.

30. *he laid his carcase in his own grave*] As Joseph of Arimathea did the body of our Lord (Matt. xxvii. 60). The possession of rock-hewn tombs by families, or individuals, was common among the Jews from their first entrance into the Holy Land to their final expulsion. A sepulchre usually consisted of an underground apartment, into which opened a number of long, narrow *loculi*, or cells, placed side by side, each adapted to receive one body. The cells were 6 or 7 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 3 feet high. They were commonly closed by a stone placed at the end of each. Many such tombs still exist in Palestine.

32. *against all the houses of the high places*] *i.e.* more than the two high places at Dan and Bethel. There were many lesser high places in the land, several of which would be likely to be in Israel (iii. 4).

in the cities of Samaria] The word Samaria cannot have been employed by the old prophet, in whose days Samaria did not

exist (xvi. 24). The writer of Kings has substituted for the term used by him that whereby the country was known in his own day.

33. *who-soever would, he consecrated him*] *i.e.* he exercised no discretion, but allowed any one to become a priest, without regard to birth, character, or social position. We may suspect from this that the office was not greatly sought, since no civil governor who cared to set up a priesthood would wish to degrade it in public estimation. Jeroboam did impose one limitation, which would have excluded the very poorest class. The candidate for consecration was obliged to make an offering consisting of one young bullock and seven rams (2 Chr. xiii. 9).

34. This persistence in wrong, after the warning given him, brought a judgment, not only on Jeroboam himself, but on his family. Jeroboam's departure from the path of right forfeited the crown (xi. 38); and in that forfeiture was involved naturally the destruction of his family; for in the East, as already observed, when one dynasty supplants another, the ordinary practice is for the new king to destroy all the males belonging to the house of his predecessor. See xv. 29.

CHAP. 14. AT that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick. And
 2 Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise
 thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam;
 and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there *is* Ahijah the prophet,
 3 which told me that ^a*I should be king over this people.* ^bAnd
 take ^cwith thee ten loaves, and ^dcracknels, and a ^ecruse of honey,
 and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.
 4 And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh,
 and came to the house of Ahijah. ¶ But Ahijah could not see;
 5 for his eyes ^fwere set by reason of his age. And the LORD said
 unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a
 thing of thee for her son; for he *is* sick: thus and thus shalt
 thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she
 6 shall feign herself to be another woman. And it was so, when
 Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door,
 that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest
 thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with ^gheavy
 7 tidings. Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel,
^hForasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made
 8 thee prince over my people Israel, and ⁱrent the kingdom away
 from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast
 not been as my servant David, ^jwho kept my commandments,
 and who followed me with all his heart, to do *that only which*
 9 *was right in mine eyes; but hast done evil above all that were*
 before thee: ^kfor thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and

^a ch. 11. 31.

^b ch. 13. 7.

^c 1 Sam. 9. 7, 8.

^d ch. 11. 20.

^h See

2 Sam. 12.

7, 8.

ch. 16. 2.

^e ch. 11. 31.

^f ch. 11. 33,

38.

^g 15. 5.

ⁱ ch. 12. 28.

2 Chr. 11. 15.

^j Heb. *in thine hand.*

^k Or, *cakes.*

^l Or, *battle.*

^m Heb. *stood for his hoariness.*

ⁿ Heb. *hard.*

XIV. 1. *at that time*] The phrase here connects the narrative which follows with Jeroboam's persistence in his evil courses. The event related is the first judgment upon him for his obduracy, the beginning of the cutting off of his house from the face of the earth.

Abijah] We see by this name that Jeroboam did not intend to desert the worship of Jehovah, since its signification is "Jehovah is my father," or "Jehovah is my desire" (Job xxxiv. 36).

2. *disguise thyself*] Jeroboam fears that even Ahijah the Shilonite, who in some sort made him king, will scarcely give his queen a favourable answer. The king's conscience tells him that he has not performed the conditions on which he was promised "a sure house" (xi. 38).

3. See marg. ref. The presents here were selected for the purpose of deception, being such as a poor country person would have been likely to bring. Jeroboam counted also on Ahijah's blindness (v. 4) as favouring his plan of deception (cp. Gen. xxvii. 1, 22).

cracknels] See margin. The Hebrew word is thought to mean a kind of cake which crumbled easily.

5. *feign herself to be another woman*] Lit., "she shall make herself strange," i.e., "she shall come in disguised." So v. 6.

6. *for I am sent to thee*] Rather, "I also

am sent to thee." As thou hast a message to me from thy husband, so have I a message to thee from the Lord.

7. As Jeroboam's appointment to the kingdom had been formally announced to him by the Prophet Ahijah, so the same Prophet is commissioned to acquaint him with his forfeiture of it. Cp. 1 Sam. xv. 26-28.

9. *above all that were before thee*] i.e. above all previous rulers of the people, whether Judges or kings. Hitherto none of the rulers of Israel had set up the idolatrous worship of ephod, teraphim, and the like (Judg. xviii. 17), as a substitute for the true religion, or sought to impose an idolatrous system on the nation. Gideon's ephod "*became a snare*" contrary to his intention (Judg. viii. 27). Solomon's high places were private—built for the use of his wives, and not designed to attract the people. Jeroboam was the first ruler who set himself to turn the Israelites away from the true worship, and established a poor counterfeit of it, which he strove to make, and succeeded in making, the religion of the great mass of his subjects.

and hast cast me behind thy back] A very strong and very rare expression, occurring again only in Ezek. xxiii. 35; where it is said of the Jews generally, shortly before the Captivity. The expressions in the marg. ref. are similar but less fearful.

- molten images, to provoke me to anger, and ^ahast cast me
 10 behind thy back: therefore, behold, ^aI will bring evil upon the
 house of Jeroboam, and ^awill cut off from Jeroboam him that
 pisseth against the wall, ^aand him that is shut up and left in
 Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jero-
 11 boam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. ^aHim
 that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him
 that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the
 12 LORD hath spoken it. Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine
 own house: and ^awhen thy feet enter into the city, the child
 13 shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him:
 for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in
 him ^athere is found *some* good thing toward the LORD God of
 14 Israel in the house of Jeroboam. ^aMoreover the LORD shall
 raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of
 15 Jeroboam that day: but what? even now. For the LORD shall
 smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall
^aroot up Israel out of this ^agood land, which he gave to their
 fathers, and shall scatter them ^abeyond the river, ^abecause they
 16 have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger. And he
 shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, ^awho did
 17 sin, and who made Israel to sin. ¶ And Jeroboam's wife arose,
 and departed, and came to ^aTirzah: and ^awhen she came to the

^a Neh. 9. 20.
 Ps. 50. 17.
^a ch. 15. 20.
^a ch. 21. 21.
^a Deut. 32. 5. 6.
 2 Kin. 14. 20.

^a ch. 16. 4.
 & 21. 21.

^a ver. 17.

^a 2Chr. 12. 12.
 & 19. 3.
^a ch. 15. 27.
 28, 29.
^a Ps. 52. 5.
^a Josh. 23.
 15, 16.
^a 2Kin. 17. 23.
^a Dent. 12.

3, 4.
^a ch. 12. 30.
 & 13. 34.
^a ch. 10. 6.
 8, 16, 23.
^a ver. 12.

10. All the males of the family of Jeroboam were put to death by Baasha (xv. 28, 29). The phrase "will cut off," &c., appears to have been a common expression among the Jews from the time of David (1 Sam. xxv. 22) to that of Jehu (2 K. ix. 8), but scarcely either before or after. We may suspect that, where the author of Kings uses it, he found it in the documents which he consulted.

him that is shut up and left in Israel] See marg. ref. note.

and will take away the remnant, &c.] The idea is, that the whole family is to be cleared away at once, as men clear away ordure or any vile refuse.

11. The dogs are the chief scavengers of Oriental cities (cp. Ps. lix. 6, 14). And the vulture is the chief scavenger in the country districts, assisted sometimes by kites and crows (see Job xxxix. 27-30, where the vulture, not the eagle, is intended). Vultures are very abundant in Palestine.

13. The child was evidently a prince of some promise. It is probable that he was heir to the throne.

14. The Hebrew text of this verse appears to be defective in this place. No satisfactory sense can be obtained from it. The true meaning of the original passage is possibly:—"Jehovah shall raise up a king who will destroy the house of Jeroboam on the day that he is raised up. What do I say? He will destroy it even now."

15. The general prophecy of Moses (Deut. xxix. 28), that the disobedient Israelites would be rooted up out of their land, and cast into another land, is here for the first

time repeated, and is definitively applied to the ten tribes, which are to be removed "beyond the river" (the Euphrates, iv. 21, 24), and "scattered." On the fulfilment of this prophecy, and especially on the *scattering* of the ten tribes, see 2 K. xvii. 6 note.

groves] See Ex. xxxiv. 13 note. The grove (or, *asherah*-) worship, adopted from the Canaanitish nations, appears to have died away after the fierce onslaught which Gideon made upon it (Judg. vi. 25-31). It now revived, and became one of the most popular of the idolatries both in Israel and Judah (r. 23, and cp. marg. ref.).

17. Jeroboam had by this time removed from Shechem, and established a new capital in Tirzah, one of the old Canaanite towns (Josh. xii. 24)—a town of great reputation for beauty, counted in that respect on a par with Jerusalem (Cant. vi. 4). Tirzah is perhaps to be identified with *Tir-luzah*, a place in the mountains about 9 miles distant from Shechem (Nablous) [or with Teiāstr (Conder)]. It may have been the palatial residence of the kings rather than the actual capital of the country. It remained the capital till Omri built Samaria (xvi. 23, 24). Towards the close of the kingdom it appears again as the city of Menahem, who murdered Shallum and succeeded him (2 K. xv. 14).

the threshold of the door] Lit., "the threshold of the house." Cp. the prophecy (v. 12). The child actually died as she crossed the threshold of the palace. Probably the palace, like that of Sargen at Khorsabad, lay at the outer edge of the town.

- 18 threshold of the door, the child died; and they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, ^aaccording to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.
- ^a 2 Chr. 13. 19 ¶ And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he ^awarred, and how he reigned, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. And the days which Jeroboam reigned *were* two and twenty years: and he ^aslept with his
- ^b 2 Chr. 12. 13. 21 fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead. ¶ And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. ^bRehoboam *was* forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city ^cwhich the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there.
- ^d vor. 31. 22 ^dAnd his mother's name *was* Naamah an Ammonitess. ¶ ^eAnd Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they ^fprovoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. For they also built them ^ghigh places, and ^himages, ⁱand groves, on every high hill, and
- ¹ Cor. 10. 22. 23 ^ghigh places, and ^himages, ⁱand groves, on every high hill, and ^junder every green tree. ^kAnd there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.
- ² Chr. 12. 2. 24 ^kAnd there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.
- ³ Heb. lay down. 25 ¶ ^lAnd it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, *that* 26 Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: ^mand he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the trea-
- ² Or, standing images, or, statues.

19. The wars of Jeroboam may be divided into—(1) his wars with Rehoboam (see *rr.* 25, 30); and (2) his war with Abijam (see *marg. ref.*).

the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel... (of Judah, v. 29)] See the Introduction, p. 265.

21. On the age of Rehoboam at his accession, see *xii.* 8 note. The seventeen years of his reign must have been complete, or a little more than complete, if Abijam ascended the throne in the "eighteenth" year of Jeroboam (*xv.* 1).

22. This defection of Judah did not take place till Rehoboam's fourth year (*marg. ref.*).

they provoked him to jealousy] Cp. *Ex.* xx. 5; and on the force of the metaphor involved in the word, see *Ex.* xxxiv. 15 note.

23. The words "they also" are emphatic. Not only did the Israelites make themselves high places (*xii.* 31, *xiii.* 32), but the people of Judah also. The "high places," which are said to have been "built," were probably small shrines or tabernacles hung with bright-coloured tapestry (*Ezek.* xvi. 16), like the "sacred tent" of the Carthaginians.

The "images" were rather "pillars" (*Gen.* xxviii. 18 note).

groves] See *r.* 15, note. The "groves," it will be observed, were built on high hills and under green trees.

under every green tree] *i.e.* under all those remarkable trees which, standing singly about the land, were landmarks to their respective neighbourhoods, and places of re-

sort to travellers, who gladly rested under their shade (*Deut.* xii. 2).

24. *sodomites]* Literally, "(men) consecrated." The men in question were in fact "consecrated" to the mother of the gods, the famous "Dea Syra," whose priests, or rather devotees, they were considered to be. The nature of the ancient idolatries is best understood by recollecting that persons of this degraded class practised their abominable trade under a religious sanction.

25. The examination of the famous inscription of Shishak at Karnak has resulted in the proof that the expedition commemorated was directed against Palestine, and has further thrown a good deal of light on the relations of the two kingdoms at the period. Of the fifteen fenced cities fortified by Rehoboam in the early part of his reign (*2 Chr.* xi. 5-12), three, Shoco, Adoraim, and Aijalon are distinctly mentioned among Shishak's conquests. Other towns of Judah or Benjamin also occur. Further a considerable number of the captured cities are in the territory of Jeroboam: these cities are *either Canaanite or Levitical*. Hence we gather, that, during the four years which immediately followed the separation of the kingdoms, Rehoboam retained a powerful hold on the dominions of his rival, many Canaanite and Levitical towns acknowledging his sovereignty, and maintaining themselves against Jeroboam, who probably called in Shishak mainly to assist him in compelling these cities to submission. The campaign was completely successful.

26. The circumstances of Shishak's inva-

27 sures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. And king Rehoboam made in their stead brassen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house. And it was so, when the king went into the house of the LORD, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard chamber. ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. 15. NOW in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father. Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lump in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jeru-

¹ Heb. runners.

² Or, candle, ch. 11. 36.

³ ch. 10. 17.

⁴ 2 Chr. 12. 15.

⁵ ch. 12. 24.

⁶ 15. 6.

⁷ 2 Chr. 12. 15.

⁸ 2 Chr. 12. 16.

⁹ ver. 21.

¹⁰ 2 Chr. 12.

¹¹ 16, Abijah.

¹² Matt. 1. 7.

¹³ Ab'a.

¹⁴ 2 Chr. 17.

¹⁵ 1, 2.

¹⁶ 2 Chr. 11.

¹⁷ 20, 21, 22.

¹⁸ 2 Chr. 13.

¹⁹ 2, Micha-

²⁰ iah the

²¹ daughter of

²² Uriel.

²³ 2 Chr. 11.

²⁴ 21, Aba-

²⁵ lom.

²⁶ ch. 11. 4.

²⁷ 18, 19, 20.

²⁸ 1 ch. 11. 32,

²⁹ 36,

³⁰ 2 Chr. 21. 7.

sion, related here with extreme brevity, are given with some fulness by the author of Chronicles (marg. ref.). It is still a question whether the submission of the Jewish king is or is not expressly recorded in the Karnak inscription. Midway in the list of cities and tribes occurs the entry "YU DeH-MALK" which it has been proposed to translate "Judah, king." Others regard it as the name of a Palestinian town not otherwise known to us.

28. It appears from this verse that Rehoboam, notwithstanding that he encouraged, and perhaps secretly practised, idolatry (v. 22-24, cp. xv. 3, 12; 2 Chr. xii. 1), maintained a public profession of faith in Jehovah, and attended in state the Temple services. Cp. the conduct of Solomon, ix. 25.

31. *slept with his fathers and was buried, &c.* Cp. xi. 43. The expression is a sort of formula, and is used with respect to all the kings of Judah, except two or three. The writer probably regards the fact, which he records so carefully, as a continuation of God's mercy to David.

his mother's name, &c. The mention of the queen-mother so regularly in the account of the kings of Judah is thought to indicate that she had an important position in the state. There are, however, only two instances where such a person seems to have exercised any power (xv. 13; 2 K. xi. 1-20).

Abijam Abijah (see marg. ref.) was probably his real name, while Abijam is a form due to the religious feeling of the Jews, who would not allow the word JAH to be retained as an element in the name of so bad a king. Instances of a similar feeling are the change of Beth-el into Beth-aven in

Hosea (iv. 15), and perhaps of Jehonahaz into Ahaz (2 K. xv. 38 note).

XV. 2. *Three years*] More strictly, not much more than two years (cp. rr. 1, 9). Any part of a year may, however, in Jewish reckoning, be taken as a year.

his mother's name was Maachah] Or Michaiah, according to the present reading of marg. ref.

the daughter of Abishalom] Absalom seems to have had but one daughter, Tamar (2 Sam. xiv. 27), so that Maachah must have been, not his daughter, but his grand-daughter. Her father (see marg.) was Uriel of Gibeah whom, therefore, Tamar married. Maachah took her name from her great-grandmother (2 Sam. iii. 3).

3. *he walked in all the sins of his father*] Yet Abijam prepared precious offerings for the Temple service (v. 15), probably to replace vessels which Shishak had carried off, and in his war with Jeroboam professed himself a faithful servant of Jehovah (2 Chr. xiii. 10-12).

4. *to set up his son*] The idolatry of Abijam deserved the same punishment as that of Jeroboam (xiv. 10-14), of Baasha (xvi. 2-4), or of Zimri (xvi. 19), the cutting off of his seed, and the transfer of the crown to another family. That these consequences did not follow in the kingdom of Judah, was owing to the "faithfulness" of David (see marg. ref.), which brought a blessing on his posterity. Few things are more remarkable and more difficult to account for on mere grounds of human reason, than the stability of the succession in Judah, and its excessive instability in the sister kingdom. One family in Judah holds the throne from first

- 5 ch. 14. 8. 5 salem : because David ^odid *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any *thing* that he commanded him all the days of his life, ^asave only in the matter of
 4, 15. 6 Uriah the Hittite. ^aAnd there was war between Rehoboam and
 & 12. 9. 7 Jeroboam all the days of his life. ¶ ^aNow the rest of the acts
 1 ch. 14. 30. of Abijam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book
 2 Chr. 13. of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war
 2-22. 8 between Abijam and Jeroboam. ^aAnd Abijam slept with his
 12 Chr. 14. 1. fathers ; and they buried him in the city of David : and Asa his
 9 son reigned in his stead. ¶ And in the twentieth year of Jero-
 10 boam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. And forty and
 one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his ¹mother's name
 11 was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. ^mAnd Asa did *that*
 2 Chr. 14. 2. *which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* David his father.
 12 ⁿAnd he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed
 13 all the idols that his fathers had made. And also ^oMaachah his
 mother, even her he removed from *being* queen, because she had
 made an idol in a grove ; and Asa ²destroyed her idol, and
 14 ⁿburnt it by the brook Kidron. ^aBut the high places were not
 removed : nevertheless Asa's ¹heart was perfect with the LORD
 15 all his days. And he brought in the ³things which his father
 had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into
 16 the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels. ¶ And
 there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their

¹ That is, *grandmother's*, ver. 2.

² Heb. *cut off*.

³ Heb. *holy*.

to last, during a space but little short of four centuries, while in Israel there are nine changes of dynasty within two hundred and fifty years.

6. The writer repeats what he had said in xiv. 30, in order to remind the reader that Abijam inherited this war from his father. Abijam's war is described in marg. ref. That the author of Kings gives none of its details is agreeable to his common practice in mere military matters. Thus he gives no details of Shishak's expedition, and omits Zerah's expedition altogether.

10. *mother's name*] Rather, *grandmother's*. The Jews call any male ancestor, however remote, a father, and any female ancestor a mother (cp. r. 2; Gen. iii. 20). This Maachah was the favourite wife of Rehoboam (2 Chr. xi. 21), and the mother of Abijam. The way in which she is here mentioned strongly favours the notion that the position of queen-mother was a definite one at the court, and could only be held by one person at a time.

13. Asa degraded Maachah from the rank and state of queen-mother.

The word translated "idol" both here and in the parallel passage (marg. ref.), does not occur elsewhere in Scripture. It is derived from a root signifying "fear" or "trembling," and may perhaps best be understood as "a fright, a horror." Such a name would seem best to apply to a grotesque and hideous image like the Phthah of the Egyptians. She made it to serve in lieu of the ordinary "grove" (*asherah*), or

idoltrous emblem of Astarte (Ex. xxxiv. 13 note). Asa cut it down, for like the usual *asherah*, Maachah's "horror" was fixed in the ground.

and burnt it at the brook Kidron] Similarly Josiah, when he removed Manasseh's "grove" (*asherah*) from the house of the Lord, brought it out to the brook Kidron, and burnt it there. The object probably was to prevent the pollution of the holy city by even the ashes from the burning.

14. 2 Chr. xiv. 3 would seem at first sight to imply that he entirely put down the worship. But idolatry, if at one time put down, crept back afterwards ; or while Asa endeavoured to sweep it wholly away, his subjects would not be controlled, but found a means of maintaining it in some places—not perhaps in the cities (see 2 Chr. xiv. 5), but in remote country districts, where the royal authority was weaker, and secrecy more practicable.

15. Abijam's dedications were made after his victory over Jeroboam, and probably consisted of a portion of the spoils which were the fruit of the battle (2 Chr. xiii. 16-19).

Asa's dedications may have been made from the spoils of Zerah the Ethiopian, who attacked him in his eleventh year (2 Chr. xiv. 9, &c.). They were not deposited in the temple till his fifteenth year (2 Chr. xv. 10, 18).

16. Baasha became king of Israel in the third year of Asa (r. 33). The petty warfare which ordinarily prevailed on the bor-

- 17 days. And ^aBaasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built ^aRamah, ^athat he might not suffer any to go out or come
 18 in to Asa king of Judah. Then Asa took all the silver and the gold ^athat were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to ^aBen-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria,
 19 that dwelt at ^aDamascus, saying, *There is* a league between me and thee, ^aand between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may ^adepart from me.
 20 So Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote
 21 with all the land of Naphtali. And it came to pass, when Baasha heard ^athereof, that he left off building of Ramah, and
 22 dwelt in Tirzah. ^aThen king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none ^awas ^aexempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them ^aGeba of Benjamin, and

^a 2 Chr. 16.

1, &c.

^a Josh. 18. 25.^a See ch. 12.

27.

^a 2 Chr. 16. 2.^a ch. 11. 23,

24.

^a 2 Kin. 15. 29.^a Judg. 18.

29.

^a 2 Sam. 20.

14.

^a 2 Chr. 10. 6.^a Josh. 21.

17.

¹ Heb. *go up*.² Heb. *free*.

ders of the two kingdoms continued "all the days" of Asa and Baasha. During the first ten years of Asa's reign he was little molested (2 Chr. xiv. 1, G).

17. Ramah (perhaps *Er-Ram*; marg. ref.) was situated halfway between Bethel and Jerusalem. Its distance from Jerusalem was no more than five miles, so that its occupation was a menace to that capital. Baasha's seizure of Ramah implies a previous recovery of the towns taken by Abijam from Jeroboam, viz., Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephraim (2 Chr. xiii. 19), and was a carrying of the war into the enemy's country. Could his conquest have been maintained, it would have crippled Judah seriously, and have almost compelled a transfer of the capital to Hebron.

that he might not suffer any to go out or come in] Baasha, in seizing Ramah, professed to be acting on the defensive. His complaint seems to have been well founded (cp. 2 Chr. xv. 9); but it was more than a defensive measure—it was the first step towards a conquest of the southern kingdom.

18. *left*] Or, according to another reading, "found." The wealthy condition of the Temple treasury is sufficiently indicated in v. 15. Cp. 2 Chr. xv. 18.

Asa's conduct in calling Benhadad to his aid, condemned by the seer Hanani (2 Chr. xvi. 7), cannot, of course, be justified; but there was much to excuse it. An alliance, it appears, had existed between Abijam and Tabrimon, Benhadad's father (v. 19)—an alliance which may have helped Abijam to gain his great victory over Jeroboam and achieve his subsequent conquests (2 Chr. xiii. 17-20). This had been brought to an end by Baasha, who had succeeded in in-

ducing Benhadad to enter into a league with him. It was only natural that Asa should endeavour to break up this league; and, politically speaking, he had a full right to go further, and obtain, if he could, the support of the Syrian troops for himself. The Israelites had set the example of calling in a foreign power, when Jeroboam obtained the aid of Shishak.

to Benhadad] On the probable succession of the Damascene kings, and on the meaning of the name Hadad, see xi. 14, 23.

19. Rather, "Let there be a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father."

20. Ijon is probably marked by the ruins called *Tel-Dibbin*, which are situated a few miles north-west of the site of Dan, in a fertile and beautiful little plain which bears the name of *Merj 'Ayn* or "meadow of fountains." On Abel-beth-maachah, or Abel-maim ("Abel-on-the waters") and Dan, see marg. ref.

For Cinneroth or Genesareth see Josh. xi. 2.

22. Geba, situated opposite to Michmash (1 Sam. xiv. 5), is almost certainly *Jeba*, which stands picturesquely on the top of its steep terraced hill on the very edge of the *Wady Suweinit*. Its position was thus exceedingly strong; and, as it lay further north than Ramah, Asa may have considered that to fortify and garrison it would be a better protection to his northern frontier than fortifying Ramah.

For Mizpah see marg. ref. From Jer. xli. 9 we learn that Asa, besides fortifying the place, sank a deep well there to secure his garrison from want of water if the town should be besieged.

- * Josh. 18.26. 23 *Mizpah. The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, *are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*
- f 2Chr. 16.12. Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his 24 feet. And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: ^aand ^bJehoshaphat his 25 son reigned in his stead. ¶ And Nadab the son of Jeroboam ¹began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of 26 Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and 27 in ¹his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin. ¶ ²And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at ³Gibbethon, which *belonged to the Philistines*; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay 29 him, and reigned in his stead. And it came to pass, when he reigned, *that* he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto ^mthe saying of the LORD, which he spake by his 30 servant Ahijah the Shilonite: ⁿ"because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

¹ Heb. reigned.

23. *The rest of all the acts of Asa*] A few of these are preserved in 2 Chr. xv. 9-15, xvi. 7-12. From the whole narrative of Chronicles we gather that the character of Asa deteriorated as he grew old, and that, while he maintained the worship of Jehovah consistently from first to last, he failed to maintain the personal faith and piety which had been so conspicuous in his early youth.

the cities which he built] Asa, during the earlier part of his reign, before any serious attack had been made upon him, had the prudence to "build fenced cities in Judah," with "walls and towers, gates and bars," so strengthening himself against a possible evil day (2 Chr. xiv. 6, 7).

in the time of his old age] See marg. ref. If it has been rightly supposed that Rehoboam was a young man of twenty-one or twenty-two at his accession (xii. 8), Asa's age at this time must have been less than fifty. It may seem strange to speak of "old age" in such a case; but Solomon was regarded as "old" at about fifty (xi. 4 note).

24. Asa prepared his own sepulchre in his lifetime, as has been so often done by Oriental kings; and his funeral was conducted with great magnificence (2 Chr. xvi. 14).

25. The sacred historian now gives an account of the contemporary kings of Israel, beginning with Nadab, who ascended the throne in Asa's second year, and concluding with Ahab, in whose fourth year Asa died. This narrative occupies him almost to the close of the first Book of Kings.

CHRONOLOGY.

Year of the divided Kingdom.	Kings of Judah.	Years of Reign.	Kings of Israel.	Years of Reign.
1	REHOBAM	17	JEROBOAM	22
5	(Invasion of Shishak).			
19	AHIJAH	3		
20	ASA	41		
22	"		NADAB	2
23	"		BAASHA	24
31	(Invasion of Zerah).			
34	(Great feast at Jerusalem).			
46	"		ELAH	2
47	"		{ ZIMRI } { OMRI }	12
59	"		AHAB	22
61	(Last year of Asa).		(4th year of AHAD).	

27. *Baasha...of the house of Issachar*] It is curious to find Issachar furnishing a king. Tola, its one very undistinguished Judge (Judg. x. 1), on obtaining office had at once settled himself in the territory of Ephraim. The tribe was as little famous as any that could be named. The "ass crouching between two burthens" was a true symbol of the patient, plodding cultivators of the plain of Esdraelon (Gen. xlix. 14, 15). Baasha probably owed his rise neither to his tribe nor to his social position, but simply to his audacity, and his known valour and skill as a soldier (xvi. 2).

- 31 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ^a And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. ¶ In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in ^b the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.
- CHAP. 16. THEN the word of the LORD came to ^c Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, ^d Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and ^e thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; behold, I will ^f take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like ^g the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. ^h Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, ⁱ *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in ^j Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead. ¶ And also by the hand of the prophet ^k Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because ^l he killed him. ¶ In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years. ^m And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza ⁿ steward of his house in

^a ver. 16.^b ch. 12. 28, 20.^c 13. 33.^d 14. 16.^e ver. 7.^f 2 Chr. 10. 2.^g 20. 34.^h ch. 14. 7.ⁱ ch. 15. 24.^j ver. 11.^k ch. 14. 10.^l 15. 20.^m ch. 14. 11.ⁿ 2 Chr. 16. 1.^o ch. 14. 17.^p 15. 21.^q ver. 1.^r ch. 15. 27.^s 20.^t See Hos.^u 1. 4.^v 2 Kin. 9. 31.¹ Heb. *which* was over.

32. An exact repetition of v. 16. From the book before him (v. 31) the writer extracts a passage which happens to correspond exactly with one which he has already extracted from the "Book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah." He does not object to repeating himself (cp. xiv. 21 and 31, xiv. 30 and xv. 6; 2 K. xvii. 6 and xviii. 11).

XVI. 1. Hanani, the father of Jehu, was seer to Asa in the kingdom of Judah (2 Chr. xvi. 7-10). His son Jehu, who here discharges the same office in the kingdom of Israel, appears at a later date as an inhabitant of Jerusalem, where he prophesied under Jehoshaphat, whom he rebuked on one occasion. He must have lived to a great age; for he outlived Jehoshaphat, and wrote his life (marg. ref.).

5. The "might" of Baasha is sufficiently indicated by those successes which drove Asa to call Ben-hadad to his aid. (xv. 17-21).

7. The natural position of this verse would be after v. 4 and before v. 5. But it may be regarded as added by the writer, somewhat irregularly, as an afterthought; its special force being to point out that the sentence on Baasha was intended to punish,

not only his calf-worship, but emphatically his murder of Jeroboam and his family. Though the destruction of Jeroboam had been foretold, and though Baasha may be rightly regarded as God's instrument to punish Jeroboam's sins, yet, as he received no command to execute God's wrath on the offender, and was instigated solely by ambition and self-interest, his guilt was just as great as if no prophecy had been uttered. Even Jehu's commission (2 K. ix. 5-10) was not held to justify, altogether, his murder of Jehoram and Jezebel.

8. *two years*] i.e. More than one year, or, at any rate, some portion of two distinct years (cp. v. 10).

9. The conspiracy of Zimri—Elah's "servant" (i.e. "subject")—was favoured by his position, which probably gave him military authority in the city, by the absence of a great part of the people and of the officers who might have checked him, at Gibbethon (v. 15), and by the despicable character of Elah, who, instead of going up to the war, was continually reminding men of his low origin by conduct unworthy of royalty.

steward] The office was evidently one of considerable importance. In Solomon's

- 10 Tirzah. And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead. ¶ And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that* he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him ¹not one that pisseth against a wall, 12 neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends. Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, ²according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha ³by Jehu the prophet, 13 for all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking 14 the LORD God of Israel to anger ⁴with their vanities. Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 15 ¶ In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in T'irzah. And the people *were* encamped 16 *against* Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines. And the people *that were* encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the 17 captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they 18 besieged T'irzah. And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, 19 and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died, for his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, ⁵in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to 20 make Israel to sin. Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, *are* they not written in the book of the 21 chronicles of the kings of Israel? ¶ Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts. half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri. 22 But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people

¹ 1 Sam. 25. 22.

² ver. 3.

³ ver. 1.

⁴ Deut. 32. 21.

1 Sam. 12. 21.

Isai. 41. 29.

Jonah 2. 8.

1 Cor. 8. 4.

& 10. 19.

& ch. 15. 27.

⁵ ch. 12. 23. & 15. 25, 34.

¹ Or, both his kinemen and his friends.

² Heb. by the hand of.

court it gave the rank of *sar*, or prince. In Persia the "steward of the household" acted sometimes as a sort of regent during the king's absence.

11. *neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends*] Zimri's measures were of much more than ordinary severity. Not only was the royal family extirpated, but the friends of the king, his councillors and favourite officers, were put to death. Omri, as having been in the confidence of the late monarch, would naturally fear for himself, and resolve to take the course which promised him at least a chance of safety.

13. *their vanities*] The "calves." The Hebrews call an idol by terms signifying "emptiness," "vapour," or "nothingness." (Cp. marg. reff.)

16. *all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king*] This passage of history recalls the favourite practice of the Roman armies under the Empire, which, when they heard of the assassination of an emperor at Rome, were wont to invest their own commander with the purple.

17. *went up*] The expression "went up" marks accurately the ascent of the army

from the Shephelah, where Gibbethon was situated (Josh. xix. 44), to the hill country of Israel, on the edge of which T'irzah stood (xiv. 17).

18. *the palace of the king's house*] The tower of the king's house. A particular part of the palace—either the *harem*, or, more probably, the keep or citadel, a tower stronger and loftier than the rest of the palace.

Zimri's desperate act has been repeated more than once. That the last king of Assyria, the Sardanapalus of the Greeks, thus destroyed himself, is almost the only fact which we know concerning him.

19. Zimri's death illustrates the general moral which the writer of Kings draws from the whole history of the Israelite monarchs, that a curse was upon them on account of their persistence in Jeroboam's sin, which, sooner or later, brought each royal house to a bloody end.

22. From a comparison of the dates given in vv. 15, 23, and 29 it follows that the contest between the two pretenders lasted four years.

Tibni's death can scarcely be supposed to

that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned. ¶ In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah. And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, ¹Samaria. But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead. ¶ And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all

* See ch. 13.
32.
2 Kin. 17. 21.
John 4. 4.
Mic. 6. 16.
" ver. 19.
" ver. 13.

¹ Heb. *Shomeron*.

have been natural. Either he must have been slain in battle against Omri, or have fallen into his hands and been put to death.

There has probably been some derangement of the text here. The passage may have run thus:—"So Tibni died, and Omri reigned in the thirty-first year of Asa, king of Judah. Omri reigned over Israel twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah." Omri's reign of twelve years began in Asa's 27th (vv. 15 and 16), and terminated in his 38th (v. 29). The event belonging to Asa's 31st year was the death of Tibni, and the consequent extension of Omri's kingdom.

The six years in Tirzah are probably made up of the four years of contention with Tibni, and two years afterwards, during which enough of Samaria was built for the king to transfer his residence there.

24. "Samaria" represents the Greek form of the name (Σαμαρία); the original is *Shomeron* (marg.). The site is marked by the modern *Sebustiyeh*, an Arabic corruption of *Sebaste*, the name given by Herod to Samaria when he rebuilt it. *Sebustiyeh* is situated on a very remarkable "hill." In the heart of the mountains of Israel occurs a deep basin-shaped depression, in the midst of which rises an oblong hill, with steep but not inaccessible sides, and a long flat top. This was the site which Omri chose for his new capital. Politically it was rather more central than Shechem, and probably than Tirzah. In a military point of view it was admirably calculated for defence. The country round it was peculiarly productive. The hill itself possessed abundant springs of water. The result is that we find no further change. Shechem and Tirzah were each tried and abandoned; but through all the later alterations of dynasty Samaria continued uninterruptedly, to the very close of

the independence, to be the capital of the northern kingdom.

Omri purchased the right of property in the hill, just as David purchased the threshing-floor (2 Sam. xxiv. 24; cp. 1 K. xxi. 2). Two talents, or 6000 shekels (Ex. xxxviii. 24 note)—about 500*l.* (or perhaps 800*l.*) of our money—may well have been the full value of the ground. And while naming his city after Shemer, Omri may also have had in view the appropriateness of such a name to the situation of the place. *Shomeron*, to a Hebrew ear, would have necessarily conveyed the idea of a "watch-tower." This name, however, appears not to have been at first accepted by the surrounding nations. The earlier Assyrian kings knew the Israelite capital, not as Samaria, but as *Beth-Khumri*, i.e. "the city (house) of Omri." It is not till the time of Tiglath-pileser that they exchange this designation for that of *Sammirin*.

25. Omri outwent his idolatrous predecessors in his zeal, reducing the calf-worship to a regular formal system, which went down to posterity (cp. marg. ref.)

27. *his might* [Perhaps in the war between Israel and Syria of Damascus (xx. 1, &c.), during the reign of Omri. Its issue was very disadvantageous to him (xx. 34, xxii. 2).

29. *twenty and two years* [Rather, from a comparison between xv. 10 and xxii. 51, not more than 21 years. Perhaps his reign did not much exceed 20 years.

30. See r. 33. The great sin of Ahab—that by which he differed from all his predecessors, and exceeded them in wickedness—was his introduction of the worship of Baal, consequent upon his marriage with Jezebel, and his formal establishment of this gross and palpable idolatry as the religion of the state.

^v Deut. 7. 3.

^a Judg. 18. 7.

^a ch. 21. 25.

^a 26.

^a 2 Kin. 10. 18.

^a 17. 16.

^b 2 Kin. 10.

^c 21, 26, 27.

^c 2 Kin. 13. 6.

^c 17. 10.

^c 21. 3.

^c Jer. 17. 2.

^d ver. 30.

^e ch. 21. 25.

^e Josh. 6. 26.

^e 2 Kin. 3. 14.

31 that were before him. And it came to pass, ¹as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, ²that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the ³Zidonians, ⁴and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in ⁵the house of Baal, which

33 he had built in Samaria. ⁶And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab

⁷did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all

34 the kings of Israel that were before him. ¶ In his days did

Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof

in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his

youngest son Segub, ⁸according to the word of the LORD, which

he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

CHAP. 17. AND ⁹Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants

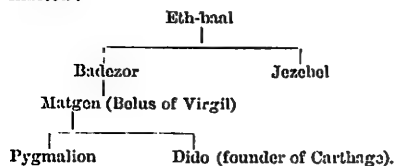
of Gilead, said unto Ahab, ¹⁰As the LORD God of Israel liveth,

¹ Heb. *was it a light thing,*
ſc.

² Heb. *El'jahu*. Luke 1. 17. & 4.
25, he is called *El'as*.

31, *as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam*] Idolatries are not exclusive. Ahab, while he detested the pure worship of Jehovah, and allowed Jezebel to put to death every "prophet of the Lord" whom she could find (xviii. 4), readily tolerated the continued worship of the "calves," which had no doubt tended more and more to lose its symbolical character, and to become a thoroughly idolatrous image-worship.

Eth-baal] Identified with the Ithobalus of Menander, who reigned in Tyre, probably over all Phœnicia, within 50 years of the death of Hiram. This Ithobalus, whose name means "With him is Baal," was originally priest of the great temple of Astarte, in Tyre. At the age of 36 he conspired against the Tyrian king, Phœles (a usurping fratricide), slew him, and seized the throne. His reign lasted 32 years, and he established a dynasty which continued on the throne at least 62 years longer. The family-tree of the house may be thus exhibited:—



Hence Jezebel was great-aunt to Pygmalion and his sister Dido.

served Baal] The worship of Baal by the Phœnicians is illustrated by such names as *Ithobal*, *Hannibal*, &c. Abundant traces of it are found in the Phœnician monuments.

34. This seems to be adduced as a proof of the general impiety of Ahab's time. The curse of Joshua against the man who should rebuild Jericho had hitherto been believed and respected. But now faith in

the old religion had so decayed, that Joshua's malediction had lost its power. Hiel, a Bethelite of wealth and station, undertook to restore the long-ruined fortress. But he suffered for his temerity. In exact accordance with the words of Joshua's curse, he lost his firstborn son when he began to lay anew the foundations of the walls, and his youngest when he completed his work by setting up the gates. We need not suppose that Jericho had been absolutely uninhabited up to this time. But it was a ruined and desolate place without the necessary protection of walls, and containing probably but few houses (Judg. iii. 13 note). Hiel re-established it as a city, and it soon became once more a place of some importance (2 Chr. xxviii. 15).

XVII. 1. The name Elijah means "Jehovah is my God." It is expressive of the truth which his whole life preached.

The two words rendered "Tishbite" and "inhabitant" are in the original (setting aside the vowel points) *exactly alike*. The meaning consequently must either be "Elijah the stranger, of the strangers of Gilead," or (more probably) "Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbi of Gilead." Of Tishbi in Gilead there is no further trace in Scripture; it is to be distinguished from another Tishbi in Galilee. In forming to ourselves a conception of the great Israelite Prophet, we must always bear in mind that the wild and mountainous Gilead, which bordered on Arabia, and was half Arab in customs, was the country wherein he grew up.

His abrupt appearance may be compared with the similar appearances of Ahijah (xi. 29), Jehu (xvi. 1), Shemaiah (2 Chr. xi. 2), Azariah (do. xv. 1), and others. It is clear that a succession of Prophets was raised up by God, both in faithful Judah and in idolatrous Israel, to witness of Him before the people of both countries, and leave them without excuse if they forsook His worship. At this time, when a grosser and more deadly idolatry than had been practised before was

^bbefore whom I stand, ^cthere shall not be dew nor rain ^dthese 2 years, but according to my word. ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan. And it shall be, *that* thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass ^eafter a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to ^fZarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman *was* there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, *As* the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither

^b Deut. 10. 8^c Jam. 5. 17.^d Luke 4. 25.^e Obad. 27.^f Luke 4. 26,

called

Sarepta.

¹ Heb. at the end of days.

introduced into Israel by the authority of Ahab, and the total apostasy of the ten tribes was consequently imminent, two Prophets of unusual vigour and force of character, endowed with miraculous powers of an extraordinary kind, were successively raised up, that the wickedness of the kings might be boldly met and combated, and, if possible, a remnant of faithful men preserved in the land. The unusual efflux of miraculous energy at this time, is suitable to the unusual emergency, and in very evident proportion to the spiritual necessities of the people.

as the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand] This solemn formula, here first used, was well adapted to impress the king with the sacred character of the messenger, and the certain truth of his message. Elisha adopted the phrase with very slight modifications (2 K. iii. 14, v. 16).

Drought was one of the punishments threatened by the Law, if Israel forsook Jehovah and turned after other gods (Deut. xi. 17, xxviii. 23; Lev. xxvi. 19, &c.).

3. brook Cherith] Rather, "the torrent course," one of the many which carry the winter rains from the highlands into that stream.

4. the ravens] This is the translation of most of the ancient Versions; others, omit-

ting the points, which are generally allowed to have no authority, read "Arabians;" others, retaining the present pointing, translate either "merchants" (cp. the original of Ezek. xxvii. 9, 27), or "Orbites." Jerome took it in this last sense, and so does the Arabic Version.

9. The dependence of Zarephath (Sarepta) on Sidon is indicated in the inscriptions of Sennacherib, where it is mentioned as belonging to Luliya (Elulæus), king of Sidon, and as submitting to the Assyrian monarch on Luliya's flight from his capital. Elijah may have been sent to this place, so near the city of Jezebel's father, as one which it was most unlikely that he would visit.

12. As the LORD thy God liveth] The words do not prove that the woman was an Israelite, or a worshipper of the true God; any Phœnician, recognising in Elijah's appearance the garb and manner of a Jehovistic Prophet, might have thus addressed him: Baal-worshippers would have admitted Jehovah to be a living God. The woman does not say "as the Lord my God liveth."

that we may eat it and die] Phœnicia always depended for its cereal supplies on the harvests of Palestine (v. 9 note); and it is evident that the famine was afflicting the Phœnicians at this time no less than the Israelites.

- shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD ¹sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat ²*many* days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake ³by Elijah. ¶ And it came to pass after these things, *that* the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, ⁴What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? ⁵And he ⁶stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come ⁷into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he ⁸revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this ⁹I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.
- CHAP. 18.** And it came to pass *after* ¹⁰many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and ¹¹I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab. And *there was* a sore
- ¹ See Luke 5. 8.
² 2 Kin. 4. 34, 35.
³ Heb. 11. 35.
⁴ John 3. 2. & 16. 30.
⁵ Luke 4. 25. Jam. 5. 17.
⁶ ch. 17. 1. Deut. 23. 12.
⁷ Heb. giveth.
⁸ Or, a full year.
⁹ Heb. by the hand of.
¹⁰ Heb. measured.
¹¹ Heb. into his inward parts.

16. This is the first recorded miracle of its kind—a supernatural and inexplicable multiplication of food (cp. 2 K. iv. 42-44; Matt. xiv. 15-21, xv. 32-38). The sacred record does not explain these miracles; but if the explanations sometimes suggested—that there was a transformation of previously existing matter into meal, oil, fish, and bread—be the true one, the marvel of the thing would not be much greater than that astonishing natural chemistry by which, in the growth of plants, particles of water, air, and earth are transmuted into fruits and grains of corn, and so fitted to be human food. There would be a difference in the agency employed and in the time occupied in the transmutation, but the thing done would be almost the same.

17. *no breath*] Or, “no spirit,” “no soul.” (Cp. Gen. ii. 7). The word used is translated “spirit” in Prov. xx. 27; Eccles. iii. 21; Job xxvi. 4; and elsewhere.

18. *What have I to do with thee?*] i.e. “What have we in common?”—implying a further question, “Why hast thou not left me in peace?” The woman imagines that Elijah’s visit had drawn God’s attention to

her, and so to her sins, which (she feels) deserve a judgment—her son’s death.

thou man of God] In the mouth of the Phœnician woman this expression is remarkable. Among the Jews and Israelites (xii. 22; Judg. xiii. 6, 8) it seems to have become the ordinary designation of a Prophet. We now see that it was understood in the same sense beyond the borders of the Holy Land.

19. *into a loft*] Rather, “into the upper chamber;” often the best apartment in an Eastern house.

21. *he stretched himself upon the child three times*] This action of Elijah is different from that of Elisha (marg. ref.), and does not imply the use of any natural means for the restoration of suspended animation. It is nearly parallel to the “touch,” through which our Lord wrought similar miracles (Matt. ix. 25; Luke vii. 14).

XVIII. 1. *the third year*] i.e. in the third year of his sojourn with the widow. The whole period of drought was three years and a half (Luke iv. 25; Jam. v. 17): of this, probably about one year was passed by Elijah in the torrent-course of Cherith, and two years and a half at Sarepta.

3 famine in Samaria. ¶ And Ahab called ¹Obadiah, which *was* ²the governor of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly : 4 for it was *so*, when ³Jezabel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty 5 in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks : peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, ⁴that we lose not all the beasts. 6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it : Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way 7 by himself. ¶ And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him : and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, *Art* 8 thou that my lord Elijah ? And he answered him, *I am* : go, 9 tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*. And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of 10 Ahab, to slay me ? *As* the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee : and when they said, *He is not there* ; he took an oath of the 11 kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou 12 sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*. And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from thee, that ^cthe Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not ; and *so* when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me : 13 but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezabel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD's prophets by 14 fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water ? And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here* : and he 15 shall slay me. And Elijah said, *As* the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day. 16 ¶ So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him : and Ahab went

c 2 Kin. 2. 16.
Ezek. 3.
12, 14.
Matt. 4. 1.
Acts 8. 39.

¹ Heb. *Obadiah*.

² Heb. *Izabel*.

⁴ Heb. *that we cut not off ourselves from the beasts*.

³ Heb. *over his house*.

3. Obadiah's name, "servant of Jehovah," indicates his religious character. It corresponds to the modern Arabic name Abdallah. Ahab could scarcely have been ignorant of Obadiah's faithfulness to Jehovah ; and it tells in favour of the monarch's tolerance that he should have maintained an adherent of the old religion in so important an office. There seems to be no doubt that the worst deeds of Ahab's reign sprang less from his own free will and natural disposition than from the evil counsels, or rather perhaps the imperious requirements, of his wife.

4. We have no details of Jezabel's deed of blood. Some have conjectured that it was the answer of Jezabel to Elijah's threat, and that the command given him to hide in Cherith alone saved him from being one of the victims. This view receives some support from Obadiah's act and words (v. 13).

fifty in a cave] The limestone formation of Judæa and Samaria abounds with large natural caverns, the size of which is easily increased by art. These "caves" play an important part in the history of the country,

serving especially as refuges for political offenders and other fugitives (Judg. vi. 2 ; 1 Sam. xiii. 6 ; Heb. xi. 38).

5. *unto all fountains of water and unto all brooks*] Rather, "to all springs of water and to all torrent-courses." The former are the perennial streams ; the latter are the torrent-courses which become dry in an ordinary summer.

all the beasts] Rather, some, or, "a portion of our beasts."

9. Obadiah thinks that to execute this commission will be fatal to him (v. 12).

10. *there is no nation*, &c.] This is expressed in the style of Oriental hyperbole. What Obadiah means is :—"there is no nation nor kingdom, of those *or* which he *has* influence, whither the king has not sent." He could scarcely, for example, have exacted an oath from such countries as Egypt or Syria or Damascus. But Ahab may have been powerful enough to exact an oath from the neighbouring Hittite, Moabite, and Edomite tribes, perhaps even from Ethbaal his father-in-law, and the kings of Hamath and Arpad.

- 17 to meet Elijah. ¶ And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, ^dArt thou he that troubleth Israel? 18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, ^ein that ye have forsaken the commandments of 19 the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send and gather to me all Israel unto Mount ^fCarmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, ^gand the prophets of the 20 groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and ^hgathered the prophets 21 together unto mount Carmel. ¶ And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, ⁱHow long halt ye between two ^jopinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, ^kthen follow him. 22 And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, ^lI, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD;

¹ Or, *thoughts?*

17. *Art thou he, &c.*] Meaning, "Can it possibly be that thou dost venture to present thyself before me, thou that troublest Israel by means of this terrible drought?" The charge of "troubling" had never before been brought against any one but Achan (marg. ref. c); it was one which must have called to the Prophet's recollection Achan's miserable fate.

18. Instead of apologies, and pleas for pardon, Elijah meets the charge with a countercharge, and makes a sudden demand. "Gather to me," &c. This boldness, this high tone, this absence of the slightest indication of alarm, seems to have completely discomfited Ahab, who ventured on no reply, made no attempt to arrest the Prophet, did not even press him to remove his curse and bring the drought to an end, but simply consented to do his bidding. There is no passage of Scripture which exhibits more forcibly the ascendancy that a Prophet of the Lord, armed with His spiritual powers, could, if he were firm and brave, exercise even over the most powerful and most unscrupulous of monarchs.

Baalim] i.e. the various aspects under which the god, Baal, was worshipped, Baalshamin, Baalzebub, Baal-Hamman, &c.

19. Carmel (Josh. xii. 22 note) was chosen by the Prophet as the scene of the gathering to which he invited, or rather summoned, Ahab. Its thick jungles of copse and numerous dwarf-oaks and olives, would furnish abundant wood for his intended sacrifice. Here was a perennial fountain; and here again an ancient "altar of the LORD" (r. 20), belonging probably to the old times of non-idolatrous high-place worship—perhaps an erection of one of the Patriarchs. On the one hand, there would be a view of the Mediterranean, whence the first sign of rain was likely to come, and on the other of Jezreel, the residence of the Court at the time, with its royal palace and its idol-temples, so that the intended trial would take place in the sight (so to speak) of the proud queen and her minions.

the prophets of Baal] The priests of Baal are so called not so much because they claimed a power of foretelling the future, as because they were *teachers* of the false religion, and more especially because they stand here in antagonism to the "Prophet of the LORD," with whom they are about to contend.

the prophets of the groves, four hundred] Rather, "of the grove"—the prophets, or priests, attached to the "grove" (*asherah*) which Ahab had made, probably at Jezreel (marg. ref.) The number 400 seems to have been one especially affected by Ahab. We again find 400 prophets at the close of his reign (xxii. 6). The number 40 entered largely into the religious system of the Jews (vi. 17; Ex. xxvi. 19; Deut. xxv. 3; Ezek. xli. 2).

which eat at Jezebel's table] Rather, "which eat from Jezebel's table." Oriental etiquette would not have allowed them to eat at the table of the queen, which was spread in the seraglio. They were fed from the superfluity of her daily provision, which was no doubt on a sumptuous scale. Cp. iv. 22, 23.

20. Local tradition places the site of Elijah's sacrifice, not on the highest point of the mountain (1728ft.), but at the south-eastern extremity (1600ft.) of the ridge, where a shapeless ruin, composed of great hewn stones, and standing amid thick bushes of dwarf-oak, in the near vicinity of a perennial spring, is known to the Arabs as "El-Maharrakah," "the burning," or "the sacrifice." All the circumstances of the locality adapt it for the scene of the contest.

21. The people were dumb. They could not but feel the logical force of Elijah's argument; but they were not prepared at once to act upon it. They wished to unite the worship of Jehovah with that of Baal—to avoid breaking with the past and completely rejecting the old national worship, yet at the same time to have the enjoyment of the new rites, which were certainly sensuous, and probably impure.

22. *I, even I, only remain*] He means, "I

- 23 "but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire *under*: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it
 24 on wood, and put no fire *under*: and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people
 25 answered and said, 'It is well spoken. ¶ And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of
 26 your gods, but put no fire *under*. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered.
 27 And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be
 28 awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after

" ver. 10.

° ver. 38.
1 Chr. 21. 26.p Ps. 115. 5.
Jer. 10. 5.
1 Cor. 8. 4.
& 12. 2.7 Lev. 19. 28.
Deut. 14. 1.1 Heb. *The word is good.*4 Or, *leaped up and down at the altar.*6 Or, *he meditated.*2 Or, *answer.*5 Heb. *with a great voice.*7 Heb. *hath a pursuit.*3 Or, *heard.*

only remain in the exercise of the office of a Prophet." The others (cp. v. 4) had been forced to fly and hide themselves in dens and caves of the earth; their voices were silenced; they had not ventured to come to Carmel. Elijah contrasts his solitary appearance on the side of Jehovah at the great gathering with the crowd of those opposed to him.

24. *the God that answereth by fire*] God had frequently before consumed offerings with supernatural fire (Lev. ix. 24; Judg. vi. 21). The Baal-worshippers were no doubt in the habit of attributing thunder and lightning to their god—the great Nature-power—and thus had no excuse for declining Elijah's challenge.

25. Elijah gives precedence in everything to the Baal-priests, to take away all ground for cavil in case of failure. It is his object to make an impression on king and people; and he feels rightly that the impression will depend greatly on the contrast between their inability and the power given to him.

26. *and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon*] Cp. the parallel in the conduct of the Greeks of Ephesus. (Acts xix. 34). The words "O Baal, hear us," probably floated on the air as the refrain of a long and varied hymn of supplication.

they leaped upon the altar which was made] The marginal rendering is preferable to this. Wild dancing has always been a devotional exercise in the East, and remains so to this day; witness the dancing dervishes. It was practised especially in the worship of Nature-powers, like the Dea Phrygia (Cybele), the Dea Syria (Astarte?), and the like.

27. The object of Elijah's irony was twofold; (1) to stimulate the priests to greater exertions, and so to make their failure more complete, and (2) to suggest to the people that such failure would prove absolutely that Baal was no God.

The force of the expressions seems to be, "Cry on, only cry louder, and then you will make him hear; for surely he is a god; surely you are not mistaken in so regarding him." He is "talking," or "meditating;" the word used has both senses, for the Hebrews regarded "meditation" as "talking with oneself;" "or he is pursuing;" rather, perhaps, "he hath a withdrawing," i.e., "he hath withdrawn himself into privacy for awhile," as a king does upon occasions. The drift of the whole passage is scornful ridicule of the anthropomorphic notions of God entertained by the Baal-priests and their followers (cp. i's. 1. 21). The heathen gods, as we know from the Greek and Latin classics, ate and drank, went on journeys, slept, conversed, quarrelled, fought. The explanations of many of these absurdities were unknown to the ordinary worshipper, and probably even the most enlightened, if his religion was not a mere vague Pantheism, had notions of the gods which were largely tainted with a false anthropomorphism.

28. Elijah's scorn roused the Baal-priests to greater exertions. At length, when the frenzy had reached its height, knives were drawn, and the blood spirted forth from hundreds of self-inflicted wounds, while an ecstasy of enthusiasm seized many, and they poured forth incoherent phrases, or perhaps an unintelligible jargon, which was believed to come from divine inspiration,

- their manner with knives and lancets, till ¹the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, ²and they prophesied until the time of the ³offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was ⁴neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any ⁵that regarded. ¶ And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. ⁶And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, "Israel shall be thy name: and with the stones he built an altar ⁷in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he ⁸put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid ⁹him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and ¹⁰pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ¹¹ran round about the altar; and he filled ¹²the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, ¹³let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and
- ¹ Heb. poured out blood upon them. ² Heb. ascending. ³ Heb. attention. ⁴ Heb. went.

and constituted one of their modes of prophecy.

The practice of inflicting gashes on their limbs, in their religious exercises, was common among the Carians, the Syrians, and the Phrygians. We may regard it as a modification of the idea of human sacrifice. The gods were supposed to be pleased with the shedding of human blood.

[*lancets*] Lancets, in our modern sense of the word, can scarcely have been intended by our translators. The Hebrew word is elsewhere always translated "spears," or "lances;" and this is probably its meaning here.

29. and they prophesied] Cp. xxii. 12. The expression seems to be used of any case where there was an utterance of words by persons in a state of religious ecstasy.

until the time of the offering &c.] Rather, "Until towards the time." Elijah had built his altar by the actual time of the offering (v. 36).

32. he built an altar in the name of the LORD] i.e. calling, as he built it, on the name of Jehovah, and so dedicating it to His service.

two measures of seed] Literally, "two seahs of seed." The seah contained about three gallons.

33. And he put the wood in order, &c.] He obeyed, that is, all the injunctions of the Law with respect to the offering of a burnt sacrifice (marg. ref.). He thus publicly

taught that the ordinances of the Law were binding upon the kingdom of Israel.

[*barrels*] Rather, "pitchers" or "water-jars," such as the maidens used to carry on their heads (Gen. xxiv. 14-20. Cp. Judg. vii. 16, 19). The flooding the sacrifice and the trench with water would at once do away with any suspicion of fraud, and greatly enhance in the eyes of the people the marvellousness of the miracle. The unfailing spring at the eastern end of Carmel (v. 19), was capable of furnishing as much water as he needed.

36. at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice] i.e. probably "the ninth hour," or three o'clock. Thus there might still remain about five hours of light, during which the other events of the day were accomplished.

LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel] This solemn address would carry back the thoughts of the pious to the burning bush of Horeb, and the words there spoken (marg. ref.); for there only had this mysterious formula been used before. Its use now was calculated to stir their faith and prepare them in some degree for God's answering by fire.

that I have done all these things at thy word] i.e. "That I have been divinely directed in all that I have done publicly as a Prophet, in proclaiming the drought, in gathering this assembly, and in proposing this trial; that I have not done them of my own mind" (marg. ref.).

- 37 *that* ^d I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again.
- 38 Then ^e the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up
- 39 the water that *was* in the trench. And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, ^f The LORD, he *is* the
- 40 God; the LORD, he *is* the God. And Elijah said unto them, ^g Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook
- 41 Kishon, and ^h slew them there. ¶ And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* ^a a sound of abundance
- 42 of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; ⁱ and he cast himself down upon
- 43 the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is nothing*. And he said, Go again
- 44 seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, ^j Prepare *thy*
- 45 *chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab
- 46 rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on

^d Num. 16.
29.

^e Lev. 9. 24.
Judg. 6. 21.
¹ Chr. 21. 26.
² Chr. 7. 1.
^f ver. 24.

^g 2 Kin. 10.

^h Dent. 13. 5.
& 18. 20.

ⁱ Jam. 5. 17,
18.

¹ Or, *Apprehend*.

² Or, *a sound of a noise of rain*.

³ Heb. *Tie, or, Bind*.

37. *that thou hast turned their heart*] The hearts of the people were turning. Elijah speaks of them as already turned, anticipating the coming change, and helping it on.

38. *the fire of the LORD fell*] This cannot have been a flash of lightning. It was altogether, in its nature as well as in its opportuneness, miraculous. Cp. marg. ref. for the conduct of the people.

39. *the LORD, he is the God*] The people thus pronounced the matter to be clearly and certainly decided. Baal was overthrown; he was proved to be no god at all. The Lord Jehovah, He, and He alone, is God. Him would they henceforth acknowledge, and no other.

40. Elijah required the people to show their conviction by acts—acts which might expose them to the anger of king or queen, but which once committed would cause them to break with Baal and his worshippers for ever.

Elijah is said to have slain the “prophets of Baal,” because the people slew them by his orders. Why they were brought down to the torrent-bed of Kishon to be killed, is difficult to explain. Perhaps the object of Elijah was to leave the bodies in a place where they would not be found, since the coming rain would, he knew, send a flood down the Kishon ravine, and bear off the corpses to the sea. Elijah’s act is to be justified by the express command of the Law, that idolatrous Israelites were to be

put to death, and by the right of a Prophet under the theocracy to step in and execute the Law when the king failed in his duty.

41. *Get thee up, eat and drink*] Ahab had descended the hill-side with Elijah, and witnessed the slaughter of the priests. Elijah now bade him ascend the hill again, and partake of the feast which was already prepared, and which always followed upon a sacrifice.

there is a sound of abundance of rain] Either the wind, which in the East usually heralds rain, had begun to rise, and sighed through the forests of Carmel—or perhaps the sound was simply in the Prophet’s ears, a mysterious intimation to him that the drought was to end, and rain to come that day.

42. Ahab could feast; Elijah could not, or would not. Ascending Carmel not quite to the highest elevation (r. 43), but to a point, a little below the highest, whence the sea was not visible, he proceeded to pray earnestly for rain, as he had prayed formerly that it might not rain.

43. Tradition says that Elijah’s servant was the son of the widow of Sarepta (xvii. 23).

44. *a little cloud, &c.*] Sailors know full well that such a cloud on the far horizon is often the forerunner of a violent storm.

46. Divinely directed, and divinely upheld, Elijah, instead of resting, ran in advance of the king’s chariot the entire distance of at least 16 miles to the entrance of

^k 2 Kin. 1.29.
^l & 9. 1.

^a ch. 13. 40.

^b Ruth 1. 17.
 ch. 20. 19.
² Kin. 6. 31.

^c Num. 11.
 15.
 Jonah 1. 3, 8.

Elijah; and he ^kgirded up his loins, and ran before Ahab ^lto the entrance of Jezreel.

CHAP. 19. AND Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and ² withal how he had ^aslain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, ^bSo let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one ³ of them by to-morrow about this time. And when he saw ^cthat, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which ⁴ belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. ¶ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he ^erequested ^ffor himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take ⁵ away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel

¹ Heb. *till thou come to Jezreel.*

² Heb. *for his life.*

Jezreel. He thus showed himself ready to countenance and uphold the irresolute monarch, if he would turn from his evil courses, and proceed to carry out the religious reformation which the events of the day had inaugurated.

[the entrance of Jezreel] Modern Zerin. Ahab had not removed the capital from Samaria (xxii. 10, 37); but he had built himself a palace at Jezreel (xxi. 1), and appears to have resided there ordinarily. A contemporary Assyrian inscription speaks of him as "Ahab of Jezreel."

Elijah's caution in accompanying Ahab only to "the entrance" is like that of the modern Arabs, who can seldom be induced to trust themselves within walls. He rested on the outskirts of the town, waiting to learn what Jezebel would say or do, knowing that it was she, and not Ahab, who really governed the country.

XIX. 2. The Prophet had not long to wait before learning the intentions of the queen. A priest's daughter herself, she would avenge the slaughtered priests; a king's wife and a king's child, she would not quail before a subject. That very night a messenger declared her determination to compass the Prophet's death within the space of a day.

[^a let the gods, &c.] A common oath about this time (marg. ref.). The Greek Version prefixes to this another clause, which makes the oath even more forcible, "As surely as thou art Elijah and I am Jezebel, so let the gods," &c.

3. The rapid movement of the original is very striking. "And he saw (or, feared, as some read), and he rose, and he went, &c." The fear and flight of Elijah are very remarkable. Jezebel's threat alone, had not, in all probability, produced the extraordinary change; but, partly, physical reaction from the over-excitement of the preceding day; and, partly, internal disquietude and doubt as to the wisdom of the course which he had adopted.

Beer-sheba is about 95 miles from Jezreel,

on the very borders of the desert et-Tih. Elijah cannot possibly have reached it until the close of the second day. It seems implied that he travelled both night and day, and did not rest till he arrived thus far on his way. It was one of the towns assigned to the tribe of Simeon (Josh. xix. 2). The Simeonites were, however, by this time absorbed into Judah.

4. Elijah did not feel himself safe till he was beyond the territory of Judah, for Ahab might demand him of Jehoshaphat (xviii. 10), with whom he was on terms of close alliance (xxii. 4). He therefore proceeds southward into the desert, simply to be out of the reach of his enemies.

[a juniper-tree] The tree here mentioned (*rothem*) is not the juniper, but a species of broom (*Genista monosperma*), called *rothem* by the Arabs, which abounds in the Sinaitic peninsula. It grows to such a size as to afford shade and protection, both in heat and storm, to travellers.

[requested for himself that he might die.] Like Moses and Jonah (marg. ref.). The Prophet's depression here reached its lowest point. He was still suffering from the reaction of overstrained feeling; he was weary with nights and days of travel; he was faint with the sun's heat; he was exhausted for want of food; he was for the first time alone—alone in the awful solitude and silence of the great white desert. Such solitude might brace the soul in certain moods; but in others it must utterly overwhelm and crush. Thus the Prophet at length gave way completely—made his prayer that he might die—and, exhausted sank, to sleep.

[*I am not better than my fathers*] i.e. "I am a mere weak man, no better nor stronger than they who have gone before me, no more able to revolutionize the world than they."

5. [an angel touched him] The friendly ministrations of Angels, common in the time of the Patriarchs (Gen. xviii. 2-16, xix. 1-22, xxviii. 12, xxxii. 1, 24-29), and known also under the Judges (Judg. vi. 11-21, xiii. 3-20), was now extended to Elijah.

6 touched him, and said unto him, Arise *and* eat. And he looked, and, behold, *there was* a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his ¹head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him
 7 down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat; because the
 8 journey *is* too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat ^dforty days and
 9 forty nights unto ^eHoreb the mount of God. ¶ And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou
 10 here, Elijah? And he said, ^fI have been very ^gjealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and ^hslain thy prophets with the sword; and ⁱI, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my
 11 life, to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand ^kupon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and ^la great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the
 12 wind: and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And

^d So Ex.

34. 23.

Deut. 9. 9, 19

Matt. 4. 2.

^e Ex. 3. 1.^f Rom. 11. 3.^g Num. 25.

11, 13.

Ps. 69. 9.

^h ch. 18. 4.ⁱ Rom. 11. 3.^k Ex. 24. 12.^l Ezek. 1. 4.

& 37. 7.

¹ He's. *bolster*.

Any other explanation of this passage does violence to the words. It is certainly not the intention of the writer to represent Elijah as relieved on this occasion by a human "messenger."

6. *a cake baken on the coals*] It is not implied that Elijah found a fire lighted and the cake on it, but only that he found one of the usual baked cakes of the desert, which form the ordinary food of the Arab at the present day.

at his head] The Hebrew word means simply "the place on which the head lies;" hence the marginal rendering, "bolster."

7. *Arise and eat, &c.*] i.e. "Eat a second time, for *otherwise* the journey will be beyond thy powers." "The journey" was not simply a pilgrimage to Horeb, which was less than 200 miles distant, and might have been reached in six or seven days. It was to be a wandering in the wilderness, not unlike that of the Israelites when they came out of Egypt; only it was to last forty days instead of forty years.

8. The old commentators generally understood this to mean that Elijah had no other food at all, and compared this long fast with that of Moses and that of our Lord (marg. *riff.*). But the words do not exclude the notion of the Prophet's having obtained such nourishment from roots and fruits as the desert offers to a wanderer, though these alone would not have sustained him.

9. *a cave*] Rather, "the cave." Some well-known cave must be intended—perhaps the "clift of the rock" (Ex. xxxiii. 22). The traditional "cave of Elijah" which is shown in the secluded plain immediately below the highest summit of the

Jebel Mousa, cannot, from its small size, be the real cavern.

10. *I, even I only, am left*] The same statement as in xviii. 22, but the sense is different. There Elijah merely said that he alone remained to execute the Prophet's office, which was true; here he implies that he is the only Prophet left alive, whereas a hundred had been saved by Obadiah (xviii. 4).

11. *and behold, the LORD passed by*] The remainder of this verse and the whole of the next are placed by the LXX., and by the Arabic translator, in the mouth of the Angel. But it seems best to regard the vision as ending with the words "before the Lord"—and the writer as then assuming that this was done, and proceeding to describe what followed.

12. *a still small voice*] Literally, "a sound of soft stillness." The teaching is a condemnation of that "zeal" which Elijah had gloried in, a zeal exhibiting itself in fierce and terrible vengeance, and an exaltation and recommendation of that mild and gentle temper, which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." But it was so contrary to the whole character of the stern, harsh, unsparing Tishbite, that it could have found no ready entrance into his heart. It may have for a while moderated his excessive zeal, and inclined him to gentler courses; but later in his life the old harshness re-occurred in a deed in reference to which our Lord himself drew the well-known contrast between the spirits of the two Dispensations (Luke ix. 51-56).

^a So Ex. 3.6.
Isai. 6. 2.

ⁿ ver. 9.

^o ver. 10.

^p 2 Kin. 8.

12, 13.

^q 2 Kin. 9.

1-3.

^r Luke 4.

27, called

Eliuena.

^s 2 Kin. 8. 12.

& 9. 14, &c.

& 10. 6, &c.

& 13. 3.

^t See Hos.

6. 5.

^u Rom. 11. 4.

^v See Hos.

13. 2.

it was *eo*, when Elijah heard *it*, that ^mhe wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. ⁿAnd, behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? ^oAnd he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, *even I only*, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: ^pand when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: and ^qJehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and ^rElisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And ^sit shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu ^tshall Elisha slay. 18 ^uYet ^vI have left *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, ^wand every mouth which hath not kissed him. ¶ So he departed thence, and found Elisha the

¹ Cr, *I will leave.*

13. *mantle*] The upper garment, a sort of short cloak or cape—perhaps made of untanned sheepskin, which was, besides the strip of leather round his loins, the sole apparel of the Prophet (cp. Matt. iii. 4). For the action cp. marg. ref.

there came a voice unto him, &c.] The question heard before in vision is now put again to the Prophet by the Lord Himself. Elijah gives no humbler and more gentle answer. He is still satisfied with his own statement of his case.

15. The answer is not a justification of the ways of God, nor a direct proof of the Prophet's weakness and despondency, nor an explanation or application of what Elijah had seen. For the present, he is simply directed back into the path of practical duty. His mission is not yet over, there is still work for him to do. He receives special injunctions with respect to Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha; and he is comforted with a revelation well adapted to rouse him from his despondency: there are seven thousand who will sympathise with him in his trials, and who need his care and attention.

the wilderness of Damascus] Probably the district north of the Prophet's own country, between Bashan and Damascus itself, and which was known in later times as Iturea and Gaulanitis. Here the Prophet might be secure from Jezebel, while he could readily communicate with both Israel and Damascus, and execute the commissions with which he was intrusted.

when thou comest, anoint] Rather, "and thou shalt go and anoint." Elijah performed one only of the three commissions given to him. He appears to have been left free to choose the time for executing his commissions, and it would seem that he thought the proper occasion had not arisen either for the first or the second before his

own translation. But he took care to communicate the divine commands to his successor, who performed them at the fitting moment (marg. ref.).

16. *Jehu, the son of Nimshi*] In reality the grandson of Nimshi. But he seems to have been commonly known by the above title (2 K. ix. 20; 2 Chr. xxii. 7), perhaps because his father had died and his grandfather had brought him up.

Abel-meholah] See Judg. vii. 22 note. [Conder identifies it with Ain Helveh.]

Elisha... shalt thou anoint] This is almost the only place where we hear of the anointing of Prophets (cp. 1 Chr. xvi. 22 and Ps. cv. 15).

17. Cp. marg. ref.

shall Elisha slay] i.e. With a spiritual slaying by the "word of the Lord," which is "sharper than any two-edged sword," and may be said to slay those whose doom it pronounces (cp. marg. ref.; Jer. i. 10). Elisha does not seem, like Elijah, to have executed God's judgments on the guilty.

18. *Yet I have left me, &c.*] Rather, as in the margin, "Seven thousand" faithful Israelites shall survive all the persecutions of Ahab and Jezebel, and carry down the worship of Jehovah to another generation. Elijah is mistaken in supposing that he only is left. The number is manifestly a round number, not an exact estimate. Perhaps it is, moreover, a mystical or symbolic number. Cp. Rev. vii. 5-8. Of all the symbolical numbers used in Scripture, seven is the commonest.

every mouth which hath not kissed him] Idolaters sometimes kissed the hand to the object of their worship (Job xxxi. 26, 27); at other times they kissed the actual image (marg. ref.).

19. *plowing*] Elisha's occupation is an indication of his character. He is emphati-

son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, 'Go back again: for what have I done to thee?' And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and 'boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

CHAP. 20. AND Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and *there were* thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-

^v Matt. 8.
21, 22.

² 2 Sam. 21.

¹ Heb. *Go return.*

cally a man of peace. He passes the year in those rural occupations which are natural to the son of a wealthy yeoman—superintending the field-labourers himself, and taking a share in their toils. He thus presents a strong contrast to the stern, harsh, rugged Gileadite, who is almost half an Arab, who seems to have no settled home, no quiet family circle, who avoids the haunts of men, and is content for months to dwell in a cavern instead of under a roof.

with twelve yoke of oxen] He was ploughing in a field with eleven other ploughs at work, each drawn by one yoke of oxen. Ploughing with a single pair of oxen was the practice in Egypt, in Assyria, in Palestine, and in modern times throughout Western Asia.

passed by him] Rather, "crossed over to him." Perhaps it is meant that he crossed the stream of the Jordan.

cast his mantle upon him] The action is explained as constituting a species of adoption, because a father naturally clothes his children. The notion of fatherhood and sonship was evidently understood between them (2 K. ii. 9-12).

20. *let me, I pray thee, kiss my father, &c.*] Not an unnatural request before following his new spiritual father. Elijah sees in his address a divided heart, and will not give the permission or accept the service thus tendered. Hence his cold reply. See Luke ix. 61, 62.

go back again, &c.] i.e., "Go, return to thy ploughing—why shouldst thou quit it? Why take leave of thy friends and come with me? What have I done to thee to require such a sacrifice? for as a sacrifice thou evidently regardst it. Truly I have done nothing to thee. Thou canst remain as thou art."

21. Elisha returns to his oxen and labourers. He indicates his relinquishment of

his home and calling by the slaughter of the particular yoke of oxen with which he had himself been ploughing, probably the best beasts of the twelve, and by burning the "instruments," the ploughs and yokes, both made of wood. Next he feasts his people to show his gratitude for his call, Elijah apparently remaining the while; and then, leaving father and mother, cattle and land, good position and comfortable home, Elisha became the "minister" to the wanderer. Cp. Ex. xxiv. 13; Josh. i. 1.

XX. 1. *Ben-hadad, the king of Syria*] Probably the son of the Ben-hadad who assisted Aza against Baasha (xv. 18 note).

thirty and two kings with him] Not allies, but feudatories (r. 24). Damascus had in the reign of this Ben-hadad become the centre of an important monarchy, which may not improbably have extended from the Euphrates to the northern border of Israel. The Assyrian inscriptions show that this country was about the period in question parcelled out into a multitude of petty kingdoms, the chief tribes who possessed it being the Hittites, the Hamathites, and the Syrians of Damascus.

horses and chariots] The Assyrian inscriptions show us how very important an arm of the service the chariot force was reckoned by the Syrians. A king, who has been identified with this Ben-hadad, brought into the field against Assyria nearly four thousand chariots.

2. It may be supposed that a considerable time had passed in the siege, that the city had been reduced to an extremity, and that ambassadors had been sent by Ahab to ask terms of peace short of absolute surrender, before Ben-hadad would make such a demand. He would expect and intend his demand to be rejected, and this would have left him free to plunder the town, which was evidently what he desired and purposed.

3 hadad, thy silver and thy gold *is* mine; thy wives also and thy
 4 children, *even* the goodliest, *are* mine. And the king of Israel
 answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I
 5 *am* thine, and all that I have. ¶ And the messengers came
 again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I
 have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver,
 6 and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; yet I will send
 my servants unto thee to-morrow about this time, and they shall
 search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall
 be, *that* whatsoever is *pleasant* in thine eyes, they shall put *it*
 7 in their hand, and take *it* away. Then the king of Israel called
 all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see
 how this *man* seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my
 wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold;
 8 and ²I denied him not. And all the elders and all the people
 9 said unto him, Hearken not *unto him*, nor consent. Wherefore
 he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell my lord the
 king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I
 will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers de-
 10 parted, and brought him word again. And Ben-hadad sent
 unto him, and said, "The gods do so unto me, and more also, if
 the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people
 11 that ³follow me. And the king of Israel answered and said,
 Tell *him*, Let not him that girdeth on *his harness* boast himself
 12 as he that putteth it off. And it came to pass, when *Ben-hadad*
 heard this ⁴message, as he was ⁵drinking, he and the kings in
 the ⁶pavilions, that he said unto his servants, ⁶Set yourselves in
 13 array. And they set themselves in array against the city. ¶ And,

^a cū. 10. 2.

^b ver. 10.

¹ Heb. *desirable*.

² Heb. *I kept not back from him*.

³ Heb. *are at my feet*.

So Ex. 11. 3. Judg. 1. 10.

⁴ Heb. *word*.

⁵ Or, *tents*.

⁶ Or, *Place the engines: And they placed engines*.

6. Ben-hadad, disappointed by Ahab's consent to an indignity which he had thought no monarch could submit to, proceeds to put a fresh construction on his former demands.

7. The political institution of a Council of elders (Ex. iii. 16, &c.), which had belonged to the undivided nation from the sojourn in Egypt downwards, had therefore been continued among the ten tribes after their separation, and still held an important place in the system of Government. The Council was not merely called together when the king needed it, but held its regular sittings at the seat of government; and hence "all the elders of the land" were now present in Samaria. On the "elders of towns," see xxi. *vv.* 8-14.

Apparently the king had not thought it necessary to summon the Council when the first terms were announced to him, inasmuch as they touched only himself. The fresh demands affected the people at large, and it became necessary, or at any rate fitting, that "the elders" should be consulted.

8. "The people" had no distinct place in the ordinary Jewish or Israelitish constitution; but they were accustomed to signify

their approbation or disapprobation of the decisions of the elders by acclamations or murmurs (Josh. ix. 18; Judg. xi. 11, &c.).

10. *if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls, &c.*] In its general sense this phrase is undoubtedly a boast that the number of Ben-hadad's troops was such as to make resistance vain and foolish. We may parallel it with the saying of the Trachinian at Thermopylae, that the Persian arrows would darken the light of the sun. Probably the exact meaning is, "When your town is reduced to ruins, as it will be if you resist, the entire heap will not suffice to furnish a handful of dust to each soldier of my army, so many are they." There was a threat in the message as well as a boast.

11. Ahab's reply has the air of a proverb, with which Orientals always love to answer a foe.

12. *pavilions*] "Booths" (Gen. xxxiii. 17 marg.; Lev. xliii. 42; Jonah iv. 5). The term seems to be properly applied to a stationary "booth" or "hut," as distinguished from a moveable "tent." On military expeditions, and especially in the case of a siege, such "huts" were naturally constructed to shelter the king and his chief officers.

- behold, there ¹came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, ^cI will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD. And Ahab said, By whom? ^{c ver. 23.}
- 14 And he said, Thus said the LORD, *Even* by the ²young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall ³order the battle? And he answered, Thou. ¶ Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, *even* all the children of Israel, *being* seven thousand.
- 16 And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad *was* ^ddrinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and ^{d ver. 12. ch. 16. 1.}
- 17 two kings that helped him. And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria.
- 18 And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.
- 19 So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them. And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse
- 21 with the horsemen. And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. ¶ And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: ^efor at the return of the year the king of Syria will
- 23 come up against thee. ¶ And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods *are* gods of the hills; therefore they

¹ Heb. *approached*.² Or, *recruits*.³ Heb. *bind*, or, *tie*.

13. The Rabbinical commentators conjecture that this Prophet was Micaiah, the son of Imlah, who is mentioned below (xxii. 8).

hast thou seen all this great multitude? The boast of Ben-hadad (r. 10), was not without a basis of truth; his force seems to have exceeded 130,000 (cp. rr. 25, 29, 30). In his wars with the Assyrians we find him sometimes at the head of 100,000 men.

14. The "princes of the provinces" are the governors of districts, many of whom may have fled to the capital, as the hostile army advanced through Galilee and northern Samaria. The "young men" are their attendants, youths unaccustomed to war.

Who shall order the battle? i.e. "Who shall join battle, begin the attack? We or the enemy?" The reply was, that the Israelites were to attack.

15. *seven thousand* Considering how populous Palestine was in the time of the earlier Israelite kings (see 2 Chr. xiii. 3, xiv. 8, xvii. 14-18), the smallness of this number is somewhat surprising. If the reading be sound, we must suppose, first, that Ben-hadad's attack was very sudden, and that Ahab had no time to collect forces from distant parts of the country; and secondly, that during the long siege the garrison of Samaria had been greatly reduced, till it now did not exceed 7,000 men fit for service.

16. *drinking himself drunk* Ben-hadad meant probably to mark his utter contempt of his foe. Cp. the contempt of Belshazzar (Dan. v. 1-4).

17. *Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him* The LXX. have a better reading—"they sent and told the king of Syria."

22. *Go, strengthen thyself, &c.* That is, "collect troops, raise fortifications, obtain allies—take all the measures thou canst to increase thy military strength. Be not rash, but consider well every step—for a great danger is impending."

at the return of the year i.e. "When the season for military operations again comes round." The wars of the Oriental monarchs at this time, like those of early Rome, were almost always of the nature of annual incursions into the territories of their neighbours, begun in spring and terminating in early autumn. Sustained invasions, lasting over the winter into a second or a third year, are not found till the time of Shalmaneser (2 K. xvii. 5, xviii. 9, 10), and do not become common till the Median and Babylonian period.

23. *Their gods are gods of the hills* The local power and influence of deities was a fixed principle of the ancient polytheism. Each country was considered to have its own gods; and wars were regarded as being to a great extent struggles between the gods

- were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the
 24 plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And do this
 thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put
 25 captains in their rooms: and number thee an army, like the
 army ¹that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for char-
 iot: and we will fight against them in the plain, *and* surely we
 shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their
 26 voice, and did so. And it came to pass at the return of the
 year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to
f Josh. 13. 4. 27 ¹Aphek, ²to fight against Israel. And the children of Israel were
 numbered, and ³were all present, and went against them: and
 the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of
 28 kids; but the Syrians filled the country. ¶ And there came a
 man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus
ver. 13. saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, the LORD *is* God
 of the hills, but he *is* not God of the valleys, therefore ⁴will I
 deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall
 29 know that I *am* the LORD. ¶ And they pitched one over against
 the other seven days. And *so* it was, that in the seventh day the
 battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians
 30 an hundred thousand footmen in one day. But the rest fled to
 Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven
 thousand of the men *that were* left. ¶ And Ben-hadad fled, and
 31 came into the city, ⁴⁵into an inner chamber. And his servants
 said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the
h Gen. 37.31. house of Israel *are* merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, ^hput
 sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to

¹ Heb. *that was fallen.*² Heb. *to the war wth Israel.*³ Or, *were victualled.*⁴ Or, *from chamber to chamber.*⁵ Heb. *into a chamber with-
in a chamber*, ch. 22, 25.

of the nations engaged in them. This is apparent throughout the Assyrian inscriptions. Cp. also 2 K. xviii. 35-36, xix. 12. The present passage gives an unusual modification of this view. The suggestion of the Syrian chiefs may have been a mere politic device—they being really anxious, *on military grounds*, to encounter their enemy on the plain, where alone their chariots would be of much service. In the plain the Israelites had always fought at a disadvantage, and had proved themselves weaker than on the hills (see Judg. i. 19, 27, 34).

24. The Syrian chiefs evidently thought that want of unity had weakened their army. They therefore proposed the deposition of the kings, and the substitution, in their place, of Syrian governors:—not “captains.” The term used always denotes a civil office.

26. *Aphek*] There were several places of this name in Palestine (see marg. ref.). This Aphek has been almost certainly identified with the modern *Fik*, a large village on the present high road from Damascus to Nablous and Jerusalem. The expression “*went up to Aphek*” is appropriate; for *Fik*, though in a level country, is at a much higher elevation than Damascus.

27. *were all present*] The marginal rendering is adopted by almost all critics.

like two little flocks of kids] The word translated “little flocks” does not occur elsewhere in Scripture. It seems to mean simply “flocks.” Compare the LXX., who render *ὡσεὶ δύο ποίμνια αἰγῶν*.

28. *a man of God*] Evidently not the Prophet who had spoken to Ahab the year before (vr. 13, 22). He probably dwelt in the neighbourhood of Samaria. Now that Ahab and his army had marched out into the Trans-Jordanic territory, another Prophet, a native probably of that region, announced God’s will to them.

30. *a wall*] “The wall,” *i.e.* the wall of the town. We may suppose a terrific earthquake during the siege of the place, while the Syrians were manning the defences in full force, which threw down the wall where they were most thickly crowded upon it, and buried them in its ruins. Ben-hadad fled from the wall, where he had been at the time of the disaster, into the inner parts of the city—probably to some massive stronghold—and there concealed himself.

31. *and ropes upon our heads*] “Ropes about our necks” is probably meant. They, as it were, put their lives at Ahab’s disposal, who, if he pleased, might hang them at once.

- 32 the king of Israel : peradventure he will save thy life. So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, *Is he yet alive?*
- 33 *he is my brother.* Now the men did diligently observe whether *any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it* : and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him ; and he caused him
- 34 to come up into the chariot. And Ben-hadad said unto him, 'The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore ; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent
- 35 him away. ¶ And a certain man of ^{the sons of the prophets} said unto his neighbour ^{in the word of the LORD}, Smito me, I
- 36 pray thee. And the man refused to smite him. Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, ^{a lion found}
- 37 him, and slew him. Then he found another man, and said, Smito me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, ^{so that in}

ch. 15. 20.

2 Kin. 2.

3, 5, 7, 15.

ch. 13. 17,

18.

ch. 13. 24.

¹ Heb. *smiting and wounding*.

32. Ben-hadad is now as humble as Ahab had been a year before (v. 9). He professes himself the mere *slave* of his conqueror.

33. The meaning of this verse is that the men from the first moment of their arrival were on the watch to note what Ahab would say ; and the moment he let fall the expression "He is my brother," they caught it up and repeated it, fixing him to it, as it were, and preventing his retreat. By the Oriental law of *dakheel* any one is at any time entitled to put himself under the protection of another, be that other his friend or his greatest enemy ; and if the man applied to does not at once reject him, if the slightest forms of friendly speech pass between the two, the bond is complete, and must not be broken. Ben-hadad's friends were on the watch to obtain for him *dakheel* ; and the single phrase "He is my brother," having been accepted by them on his part, was sufficient to complete the bond, and secure the life of the captive. Ahab having called Ben-hadad his brother, treated him as he would a brother ; he took him up into his chariot, than which there could not be a greater honour.

34. Ben-hadad, secure of his life, suggests terms of peace as the price of his freedom. He will restore to Ahab the Israelite cities taken from Omri by his father, among which Ramoth Gilead was probably the most important (xxii. 3) ; and he will allow Ahab the privilege of making for himself "streets," or rather squares, in Damascus, a privilege which his own father had possessed with respect to Samaria. Commercial advantages, rather than any other, were probably sought by this arrangement.

so he made a covenant with him, &c.] Ahab, without "inquiring of the Lord," at once agreed to the terms offered ; and, without even taking any security for their due observance, allowed the Syrian monarch to depart. Considered politically, the act was one of culpable carelessness and imprudence. Ben-hadad did not regard himself as bound by the terms of a covenant made when he was a prisoner—as his after conduct shows (xxii. 3). Ahab's conduct was even more unjustifiable in one who held his crown under a theocracy. "Inquiry at the word of the Lord" was still possible in Israel (xxii. 5, 8), and would seem to have been the course that ordinary gratitude might have suggested.

35. *the sons of the prophets*] The expression occurs here for the first time. It signifies (marg. reff.), the schools or colleges of Prophets which existed in several of the Israelite, and probably of the Jewish, towns, where young men were regularly educated for the prophetic office. These "schools" make their first appearance under Samuel (1 Sam. xix. 20). There is no distinct evidence that they continued later than the time of Elisha ; but it is on the whole most probable that the institution survived the Captivity, and that the bulk of the "Prophets," whose works have come down to us, belonged to them. Amos (vii. 14, 15) seems to speak as if his were an exceptional case.

said unto his neighbour] Rather, "to his friend" or "companion"—to one who was, like himself, "a Prophet's son," and who ought therefore to have perceived that his colleague spoke "in the word of the Lord."

- 38 smiting he wounded *him*. So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon
 39 his face. And ^aas the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then ^cshall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt ¹pay a talent of
 40 silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, ²he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So *shall* thy judgment *be*; thyself hast decided *it*. And he hastened, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him
 41 that he *was* of the prophets. And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, ^bBecause thou hast let go out of *thy* hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall
 42 go for his life, and thy people for his people. And the king of Israel ^cwent to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

CHAP. 21. AND it came to pass after these things, *that* Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which *was* in Jezreel, hard by the
 2 palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy ^avineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it *is* near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; *or*, if it ³seem good to thee,
 3 I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, ^bthat I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. ¶ And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

¹ Heb. weigh.² Heb. he was not.³ Heb. be good in thine eyes.

38. *[ashes]* Rather, "a bandage" (and in r. 41). The object of the wound and bandage was double. Partly, it was to prevent Ahab from recognising the Prophet's face; partly, to induce him to believe that the man had really been engaged in the recent war.

41. *he was of the prophets*] Josephus and others conjecture that this Prophet was Micaiah, the son of Imlah (but cp. v. 13 note).

42. *a man whom I appointed to utter destruction*] or to *cherem*, i.e. a man on whom My curse had been laid (Lev. xxvii. 28 note).

43. *heavy and displeased*] Rather, "sullen and angry" (and so marg. ref.), not repentant, as after Elijah's warning (xxi. 27)—not acknowledging the justice of his sentence—but full of sullenness and suppressed anger.

XXI. 1. *a vineyard...in Jezreel*] The name Jezreel is applied in Scripture, not merely to the town (xviii. 46), but also to the valley or plain which lies below it, between Mount Gilboa and Little Hermon (2 Sam. ii. 9; 2 K. ix. 10; Hos. i. 5; &c.).

The palace of Ahab at Jezreel was on

the eastern side of the city, looking towards the Jordan down the valley above described. It abutted on the town wall (2 K. ix. 30, 31). Immediately below it was a dry moat. Beyond, in the valley, either adjoining the moat, or at any rate at no great distance, was the plot of ground belonging to Naboth (do. v. 21).

2. *I will give thee the worth of it in money*] Lit., "I will give thee silver, the worth of it." Money, in our sense of the word, that is to say, coins of definite values, did not yet exist. The first coin known to the Jews was the Persian daric, with which they became acquainted during the Captivity. (1 Chr. xxix. 7 note).

3. *The LORD forbid it me*] Or, "Jehovah forbid it me." Naboth, as a worshipper of Jehovah, not of Baal, considers it would be wrong for him to comply with the king's request, as contrary to the Law (marg.). His was not a mere refusal arising out of a spirit of sturdy independence, or one based upon the sentiment which attaches men to ancestral estates.

4. *upon his bed*] That is, "upon his couch." The Jews, like other Orientals, reclined upon couches at their meals (Amos

5 ¶ But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is
6 thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto
her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto
him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee,
I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will
7 not give thee my vineyard. And Jezebel his wife said unto him,
Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat
bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vine-
8 yard of Naboth the Jezreelite. So she wrote letters in Ahab's
name, and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters unto
the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city, dwelling with
9 Naboth. And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast,
10 and set Naboth *on high* among the people: and set two men,
sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying,
Thou didst *blaspheme* God and the king. And *then* carry him
11 out, and *stone* him, that he may die. ¶ And the men of his
city, *even* the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in
his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it *was* written
12 in the letters which she had sent unto them. ¶ They proclaimed

Ex. 22. 28.
Lev. 24. 15,
16.
Acts 6. 11.
Lev. 24. 14.
Isai. 58. 4.

¹ Heb. in the top of the people.

vi. 4; Ezek. xxiii. 41, &c.). Ahab turns his face towards the back of the couch, rejecting all converse with others, and so remains, after the banquet is served, refusing to partake of it. Such an open manifestation of ill temper is thoroughly characteristic of an Oriental king.

7. The meaning is, "Art thou king, and yet sufferest thyself to be thwarted in this way by a mere subject? I, the queen, the weak woman, will give thee the vineyard, if thou, the king, the strong man, wilt do nothing."

8. *seal*] The seal is a very ancient invention. Judah's signet and Pharaoh's signet-ring are mentioned in Genesis (xxxviii. 18, xli. 42). Signets of Egyptian kings have been found which are referred to about B.C. 2000. Sennacherib's signet, and an impression of Sargon's, are still extant. There can be no doubt that in the East, from a very remote antiquity, kings had seals and appended them to all documents which they set forth under their authority. (Cp. also Esther iii. 12, viii. 8; Daniel vi. 17). The Hebrew mode of sealing seems to have been by attaching a lump of clay to the document, and impressing the seal thereupon (Job xxxviii. 14).

his city] i.e. Jezreel (v. 1). The mode in which it is spoken of here, and in v. 11, seems to imply that it was not the city from which Jezebel wrote. The court was evidently at this time residing at Samaria (xx. 43); and Ahab may either have met Naboth there, or have gone down (cp. v. 16) to Jezreel to make his request, and then, on being refused, have returned to Samaria. The distance is not more than seven miles.

9. The object of this fast was at once to raise a prejudice against Naboth, who was assumed by the elders to have disgraced the

town; and at the same time to give an air of religion to the proceedings, which might blind persons to their real injustice.

set Naboth on high among his people] This was not an order to do Naboth any, even apparent, honour; but simply a command to bring him forward before a court or assembly, where he might be seen by all, tried, and condemned.

10. *sons of Belial*] i.e. "worthless persons" (Deut. xiii. 13 note). Witnesses must be two in number according to the Law (Num. xxxv. 30; Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15).

The word rendered "blaspheme" is that which commonly means "bless." The opposite sense of "cursing," seems, however, to be required here and in Job i. 5, 11, ii. 5. Perhaps the best explanation of the bad sense of the original word is to be found in the practice of blessing by way of salutation, not only on meeting, but also on taking leave (Gen. xlvii. 7, 10). From the latter custom the word came to mean "bidding farewell to," and so "renouncing," "casting off," "cursing."

carry him out and stone him] Naboth's offence would be twofold, and in both cases capital; blasphemy against God being punishable with death by the Law (marg. ref.), and blasphemy against the king being a capital offence by custom (ii. 8; 2 Sam. xvi. 9, xix. 21). The punishment would be stoning, since the greater crime would absorb the lesser, and the Law made stoning the punishment for blasphemy against God. As stoning always took place outside the city (see Acts vii. 58), Jezebel told the elders to "carry Naboth out."

11. The ready submission of the elders and nobles implies a deep moral degradation among the Israelites, the fruit of their lapse into idolatry.

- 13 a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, *even* against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. ^fThen they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead. ¶ And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.
- 14 ¶ And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, ^hwhich is in Samaria: behold, *he is* in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, ⁱIn the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. ¶ And Ahab said to Elijah, ^kHast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because ^lthou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. Behold, ^mI will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab ⁿhim that pisseth against the wall, and ^ohim that is shut up and loam in Israel, and will make thine house like the house of ^pJeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of ^qBaasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked ^rme to anger, and made Israel to sin. And ^sof Jezebel also spake

13. Naboth had sons who were also put to death at this time (marg. ref.). It is not improbable that they were stoned together with their parent (cp. Josh. vii. 24, 25). In the East a parent's guilt constantly involves the punishment of his children. Contrast 2 K. xiv. 6.

16. *to take possession of it*] The goods of traitors appear to have been forfeited to the Crown by the Jewish law as they still are almost universally throughout the East. Cp. 2 Sam. xvi. 4.

19. *Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?*] These words rebuke especially Ahab's indecent haste. He went to Jezreel the very day after Naboth's execution (2 K. ix. 26).

The prophecy following had a double fulfilment. The main fulfilment was by the casting of the dead body of Jehoram into Naboth's plot of ground at Jezreel, where, like Naboth's, it was left for the dogs to eat (2 K. ix. 25). This spot, which was just outside the city-wall, and close to a gate (do. v. 31), was probably the actual scene of Naboth's execution. Here did dogs lick Ahab's blood, that is, his son's blood, the execution of the full retaliatory sentence having been deferred to the days of his son, formally and explicitly, on Ahab's repentance (v. 29). But, besides this, there was a

secondary fulfilment of the prophecy, when, not at Jezreel but at Samaria (marg. ref.), the actual blood of Ahab himself, was licked by dogs, only in a way that implied no disgrace. These two fulfilments are complementary to each other.

20. The words "O mine enemy," may refer partly to the old antagonism (marg. ref.; xvii. 1, xix. 2, 3); but the feeling which it expresses is rather that of present opposition—the opposition between good and evil, light and darkness (John iii. 20.)

thou hast sold thyself to work evil] Cp. marg. ref. The metaphor is taken from the practice of men's selling themselves into slavery, and so giving themselves wholly up to work the will of their master. This was a wide-spread custom in the ancient world.

21. The Prophet changes, without warning, from speaking in his own person to speaking in the person of God. The transition is abrupt, probably because the compiler follows his materials closely, compressing by omission. One fragment omitted here is preserved in 2 K. ix. 26.

23. *And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying*] These are not the words of Elijah, but of the writer, who notes a special prophecy against Jezebel, whose guilt was at least equal to her husband's.

the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of
 24 Jezreel. "Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat. ^{a ch. 14. 11. & 16. 4.}
 25 ¶ But "there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, "whom Jezebel his wife "stirred up. And he did very abominably in following ^{c ch. 16. 30, &c. d ch. 16. 31.} idols, according to all things "as did the Amorites, whom the
 27 LORD cast out before the children of Israel. ¶ And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and "put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sack- ^{e 2 Kin. 21. 11.} cloth, and went softly. And the word of the LORD came to
 29 Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but "in his son's days will ^{f Gen. 37. 34.} I bring the evil upon his house. ^{g 2 Kin. 9. 25.}

CHAP. 22. AND they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. And it came to pass in the third year, that 2 "Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.

¹ Or, *ditch*.

² Or, *incited*.

wall] The marginal rendering "ditch," is preferable. There is always in Oriental towns a space outside the walls which lies uncultivated, and which is naturally used for the deposit of refuse of every kind. Here the dogs prowl, and the kites and vultures find many a feast.

25, *whom Jezebel stirred up*] The history of Ahab's reign throughout exhibits him as completely governed by his imperious wife. Instances of her influence are seen in *vv.* 7, 15, marg. ref., xviii. 4, xix. 2.

26. The Amorites appear here as representatives of the old Canaanite nations (*Gen.* xv. 16 note). It seems to be implied here that their idolatries were in the main identical with those of the Phœnicians which Ahab had adopted.

27. The repentance of Ahab resembles that of the Ninevites (*Jonah* iii. 5). It has the same outward signs—fasting and sackcloth—and it has much the same inward character. It springs, not from love, nor from hatred of sin, but from fear of the consequences of sin. It is thus, although sincere and real while it lasts, shallow and exceedingly short-lived. God, however, to mark His readiness to receive the sinner who turns to Him, accepted the imperfect offering (as He likewise accepted the penitence of the Ninevites), and allowed it to delay the execution of the sentence (*v.* 29). So the penitence of the Ninevites put off the fall of Nineveh for a century.

and lay in sackcloth] In this particular he seems to have gone beyond the usual practice. We do not read elsewhere of mourners passing the night in sackcloth.

and went softly] "As if he had no heart to go about any business" (*Patrick*).

29. *the evil*] *i.e.* the main evil. See *v.* 19 note; and *cp.* xxii. 38 with marg. ref.

XXII. 1. *three years*] These must be counted from the close of the second campaign of Ben-hadad (*xx.* 34). They were not full years, as is evident from the next verse. Probably the first year is that of Ben-hadad's dismissal after his defeat; the second is a year of actual peace; while the third is that in which Jehoshaphat paid his visit, and the Ramoth-Gilead expedition took place. The pause, here noticed, in the war between Israel and Syria was perhaps the result of a common danger. It was probably in the year following Ben-hadad's dismissal by Ahab, that the first great Assyrian expedition took place into these parts. Shalmaneser II. relates that on his first invasion of southern Syria, he was met by the combined forces of Ben-hadad, Ahab, the king of Hamath, the kings of the Hittites, and others, who gave him battle, but suffered a defeat.

2. This visit indicates an entire change in the relations which we have hitherto found subsisting between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The common danger to which the two kingdoms were exposed from the growing power of Syria had probably induced them to forget their differences. Jehoshaphat's eldest son, Jehoram, was married to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab; but apparently the bond between the two families had not hitherto led to any very close intimacy, much less to any joint military expeditions. Jehoshaphat seems to have taken no part in the former Syrian wars of Ahab, nor did he join in the great league against the Assyrians (*v.* 1 note). His visit now was probably one of mere friendliness, without any political object. Ahab, however, turned the visit to political advantage. From this time till the displacement of Ahab's dynasty by Jehu, very intimate relations subsisted between the

- 3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that
 4 out of the hand of the king of Syria? And he said unto Je-
 5 hoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead?
 6 And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, *I am as thou art,*
 7 my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses. ¶ And
 8 Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray
 9 thee, at the word of the LORD to day. Then the king of Israel
 10 gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and
 11 said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or
 12 shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD shall
 13 deliver it into the hand of the king. And Jehoshaphat said,
 14 *Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might*
 15 *enquire of him?* And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat,
 16 *There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we*
 17 *may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not*
 18 *prophecy good concerning me, but evil.* And Jehoshaphat said,
 19 *Let not the king say so.* ¶ Then the king of Israel called an

¹ Heb. *silent from taking it.*

two kingdoms (xxii. 49; 2 K. iii. 7, viii. 28, 29; 2 Chr. xx. 36, &c.).

3. By the terms of Ahab's covenant with Ben-hadad, Ramoth in Gilead ought, long ere this, to have been restored (xx. 34). Hence the claim "*is ours*," i.e. "it belongs to us of right though the Syrians still hold possession of it."

4. Ahab, well aware of the military strength of Syria, and feeling that he cannot now expect Divine aid (xx. 42, xxi. 21), asks the aid of Jehoshaphat, whose military resources were very great (2 Chr. xvii. 12-19). Jehoshaphat's answer is one of complete acquiescence, without reserve of any kind (cp. 2 Chr. xviii. 3). Jehoshaphat was afterwards rebuked for thus consenting to "help the ungodly" (2 Chr. xix. 2). He probably acted not merely from complaisance, but from a belief that the interests of his own kingdom would be advanced by the step which he agreed to take. The power of Syria was at this time very menacing.

5. Jehoshaphat, with characteristic piety (v. 43) takes advantage of his position as Ahab's friend and ally, to suggest inquiry of the Lord (Jehovah) before the expedition is undertaken. Lest Ahab should consent in word and put off the inquiry in act, he asks to have the Prophets called in at once: "*to-day*."

6. *the prophets*] i.e. In all probability the prophets attached to the worship of the calves; not real Prophets of Jehovah. This seems evident both from Jehoshaphat's dissatisfaction (v. 7), and from the strong antagonism apparent between the true Jehovah-Prophet Micaiah, and these self-styled "prophets of the Lord" (xx. 22-25).

the Lord shall deliver it] In the Hebrew the word here used for "Lord" is "*Adonai*." Later (i.e. in vv. 11, 12) LORD or "Jehovah"

is used. It would seem as if the idolatrous prophets shrank from employing the latter title until they found that Jehoshaphat insisted on learning the will of Jehovah in the matter.

7. Jehoshaphat was dissatisfied. These men—creatures of Ahab, tainted with the worship of calves if not with Baal-worship—had promised victory, but not in the name of Jehovah. Jehoshaphat, therefore, asked, "Is there not here a true Prophet of Jehovah besides these 400 professed prophets?"

8. *There is yet one man, Micaiah*] Elijah, it appears, had withdrawn again after the events of the last chapter, and there was no known Prophet of Jehovah within reach of Samaria except Micaiah.

he doth not prophecy good concerning me but evil] Whether the tradition in xx. 41 note be true or not, it is certain that Ahab had imprisoned him (v. 26), and probable that the imprisonment was on account of threatening prophecies. Ahab suggests to Jehoshaphat that Micaiah is one who allows his private feelings to determine the utterances which he delivers as if from Jehovah. Hence the force of Jehoshaphat's answer, "Let not the king say so;" i.e. "Let not the king suppose that a Prophet would be guilty of such impiety,"—an impiety from which even Balaam shrank (Num. xxii. 18).

9. *an officer*] More properly, as in the margin, "a eunuch." Eunuchs seem to have been first introduced among the Israelites by David (1 Chr. xxviii. 1 note). They were a natural accompaniment of the seraglio of Solomon. The present passage is the first which shows that, after the separation of the kingdom, the kings of Israel employed them (cp. 2 K. viii. 6, ix. 32).

- 10 officer, and said, Hasten *hither* Micaiah the son of Imlah. And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a ²void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the
- 11 prophets prophesied before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until
- 12 thou have consumed them. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the
- 13 LORD shall deliver *it* into the king's hand. ¶ And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets *declare* good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the
- 14 word of one of them, and speak *that which is* good. And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, ¹what the LORD saith unto
- 15 me, that will I speak. So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king.
- 16 And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but *that which is* true in the name
- 17 of the LORD? And he said, I saw all Israel ²scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house
- 18 in peace. ¶ And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did

¹ Num. 22. 32.

² Matt. 9. 33.

¹ Or, *eunuch*.

² Heb. *floor*.

10. *sit each on his throne*] Or, "were sitting." They had removed from the banquet (2 Chr. xviii. 2) to the *void place*, or empty space at the entrance of the gate (Ruth iv. 1; 2 Sam. xv. 2), where Ahab daily sat to hear complaints and decide causes. Each was seated upon his throne, the Oriental kings having portable thrones, which they took with them upon their journeys.

11. *horns of iron*] The horn in Scripture is the favourite symbol of power; and pushing with the horn is a common metaphor for attacking and conquering enemies (see Deut. xxxiii. 17. Cp. Ps. xlv. 5; Dan. viii. 4). Zedekiah, in employing a symbolical action, was following the example of a former Israelite Prophet (xi. 30).

thus saith the LORD] Or, Jehovah. Zedekiah lays aside the unmeaning "lord" (*adonai*) of the general company of Israelite prophets (v. 6), and professes to have a direct message from Jehovah to Ahab. He may have believed his own words; for the "lying spirit" (v. 22) may have seemed to him a messenger from Jehovah. All the rest followed his example (v. 12).

13. *And the messenger spake unto him, &c.*] There seems to have been a wide-spread notion among the irreligious and the half-religious of the ancient world, that their prophets were not the mere mouth-pieces of the god, but that they were persons who had power with the god, and could compel, or at least induce, Him to work their will (cp. Num.

xxiv. 10; Is. xxx. 10). They saw that the prophet's word was accomplished; they did not understand that if he falsified his message the accomplishment would no longer follow.

14. Micaiah, as a true Prophet of Jehovah, of course rejected the counsel offered him, which he felt to be at once wicked and foolish. Cp. also the resolution of Baalam, marg. ref.

15. *And he answered him, &c.*] Micaiah speaks the exact words of the 400 in so mocking and ironical a tone, that the king cannot mistake his meaning, or regard his answer as serious. The king's rejoinder implies that this mocking manner was familiar to Micaiah, who had used it in some former dealings with the Israelite monarch. Hence, in part, the king's strong feeling of dislike (cp. v. 8).

17. Thus adjured, Micaiah wholly changes his tone. Ahab cannot possibly mistake the meaning of his vision, especially as the metaphor of "sheep and shepherd" for king and people was familiar to the Israelites from the prayer of Moses (Num. xxvii. 17).

18. See v. 8. Ahab implies that he believes Micaiah to have spoken out of pure malevolence, without any authority for his prediction from God. By implication he invites Jehoshaphat to disregard this pseudo-prophecy, and to put his trust in the unanimous declaration of the 400. Micaiah, therefore, proceeds to explain the contradiction between himself and the 400, by recounting another vision.

- I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, 19 but evil? ¶ And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: ^aI saw the LORD sitting on his throne, ⁴and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. 20 And the LORD said, Who shall ¹persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, 21 and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. 22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, ^bThou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. ¹Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, 23 and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee. ¶ But Zedekiah the son of Cheneanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, ^mWhich way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee? And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go ²into ³an inner chamber 26 to hide thyself. ¶ And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to

^a Isai. 6. 1
Dan. 7. 9.
⁴ Job 1. 6.
& 2. 1.
Dan. 7. 10.
Zech. 1. 10.
Matt. 18. 10.
Heb. 1. 7.

¹ Judg. 9. 23.
Job 12. 16.
Ezek. 14. 9.
² Thes. 2. 11.
³ Ezek. 14. 9.

^m 2 Ubr. 18.
23.

¹ Or, *deceive*.

² Or, *from chamber to chamber*.

³ Heb. *a chamber in a chamber*, ch. 20. 30.

19. David's Psalms had familiarised the Israelites with Jehovah sitting upon a throne in the heavens (Ps. ix. 7, xi. 4, xlv. 6, ciii. 19, &c.); but to be allowed to see in vision the ineffable glory of the Almighty thus seated, was a rare favour. It was granted to Isaiah, to Daniel (marg. refl.), to Ezekiel (Ez. i. 26), and in Christian times to St. Stephen (Acts vii. 56), and St. John (Rev. iv. 2).

21. *a spirit* ["The spirit"—which some explain as "the evil spirit"—i. e. Satan; others as simply "the spirit" who should "persuade."]

22. The difficulties which attach to this passage are considerable. On the one hand, it is hard to suppose one of the holy Angels a "lying spirit;" on the other, hard to find Satan, or an evil spirit, included among "the host of heaven" (v. 19) and acting as the minister of God. Still, Job i. 6, ii. 1 lend countenance to the latter point, and 2 Thess. ii. 11 to the former. But it may be doubted whether we ought to take literally, and seek to interpret exactly, each statement of the present narrative. Visions of the invisible world can only be a sort of parables; revelations, not of the truth as it actually is, but of so much of the truth as can be shown through such a medium. The details of a vision, therefore, cannot safely be pressed, any more than the details of a parable. Portions of each must be accommodations to human modes of thought, and may very inadequately express the realities which they are employed to shadow forth to us.

24. *smote Micaiah on the cheek* [As Micaiah had been brought from prison (v. 26), it is probable that his hands were bound.

The Prophet, thus standing before the great ones of the earth, bound and helpless, hearing testimony to the truth, and for his testimony smitten on the face by an underling, whose blow he receives without either shame or anger, is a notable type of our Lord before Caiaphas suffering the same indignity.

Which way &c. [Zedekiah's meaning may perhaps be expounded as follows: "The Spirit of Jehovah *certainly* came to me, and inspired me with the answer which I gave. If He afterwards went to thee, as thou sayest that He did, perhaps thou canst tell us—as all the secrets of the invisible world are, thou pretendest, open to thee—which way He took."]

25. Micaiah addresses himself not so much to Zedekiah's question, as to the main point which lies in dispute—which of them, namely, is a true Prophet. "When the news, i. e., of Ahab's death, caused by his following thy counsels, reaches Samaria, and thou hast to hide thyself from the vengeance of Ahaziah or Jezebel, then, in that day, thou wilt know whether I or thou be the true Prophet."

26. *carry him back* [Lit. "cause him to return." Micaiah had been in custody before, and was brought by Ahab's messenger from his prison.

the governor of the city] This is one out of several notices respecting what may be called the "constitution" of the Israelite kingdom. The king consulted on important matters a Council of elders (xx. 7, 8). The general administration was carried on by means of the governors of provinces (xx. 14) and of cities (2 K. x. 5). The governors of cities, like the monarch, were assisted and checked by councils of elders, the wise

27 Joash the king's son: and say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and 28 with water of affliction, until I come in peace. And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, "the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he said, Harken, O people, every one of you. 29 ¶ So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went 30 up to Ramoth-gilead. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel "disguised himself, 31 and went into the battle. But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king 32 of Israel. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat "cried out. And it came to pass, when the captains 33 of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. And a certain man drew a bow "at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the 34 joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I 35 am "wounded. And the battle "increased that day: and the

^a Num. 16.

^{29.}

^{Deut. 18.}

^{20, 21, 22.}

^o 2Chr.35.22.

^p 2 Chr. 18.

^{31.}

^{Prov. 13. 20.}

¹ Or, when he was to disguise himself, and enter into the battle.

² Heb. in his simplicity,

² Sam. 15. 11.

³ Heb. joints and the breast-

^{plate.}

⁴ Heb. made sick.

⁵ Heb. ascended.

men of the several towns (xxi. 8-12; 2 K. x. 5). Thus Samaria, as we see from the present passage, was under a special governor, who, among his other duties, had the control of the public prison, and directed the treatment of the prisoners.

the king's son] The phrase seems to designate a state office, rather than relationship to the sovereign. Cp. 2 Chr. xxviii. 7.]

27. *Feed him with bread of affliction, &c.*] Micaiah is to be once more put in prison, but, in order to punish him for his uncomplaining spirit, upon a poorer and scantier diet than he had been previously allowed. This is to continue until Ahab returns in peace. Ahab introduces this expression purposely, in order to show his entire disbelief of Micaiah's prophecy.

29. It might have been expected that Jehoshaphat would have withdrawn from the expedition when he heard Micaiah denounce it. He had, however, rashly committed himself to take part in the war by a solemn promise, before he bethought himself of inquiring what was the will of God in the matter. Now he was ashamed to draw back, especially as Ahab, whom the prophecy chiefly threatened, was resolved to brave it. He may also have had a personal affection for Ahab, and so have been loth to desert him in his need. Cp. 2 Chr. xix. 2.

30. *I will disguise myself*] Ahab had probably heard of Ben-hadad's order to his captains (r. 31).

31. *commanded*] "Had commanded." Ben-hadad delivers his order in the hyper-

bolical style common in the East. His meaning is, "Make it your chief object to kill or take the king of Israel." Apparently, his own defeat and captivity were still rankling in his mind, and he wished to retaliate on Ahab the humiliation which he considered himself to have suffered. Heshows small appreciation of the generosity which had spared his life and restored him to his kingdom.

32. *Surely it is the king of Israel*] This was a natural supposition, as Jehoshaphat alone wore royal robes.

and Jehoshaphat cried out] Jehoshaphat called to his men for help, using perhaps his own peculiar battle-cry, which would be distinct from that of Ahab, and would probably be known to the Syrians.

34. *at a venture*] Lit. as in margin, i.e. without intent to kill the king.

between the joints of the harness] Lit. as in the margin. The "joints" were probably pieces of armour which attached the breastplate to the helmet or to the greaves. The arrow entered between the breastplate and one of these "joints." Breastplates made of metal scales were common both in Egypt and Assyria.

Turn thine hand] Lit. "turn thy hands." The driver of a chariot, both in Egypt and Assyria, held the reins with his two hands.

35. *the battle increased*] See margin; i.e. the tide of battle rose higher. Cp. Is. viii. 7, 8.

- king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying,—Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria: and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake. ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead. ¶ And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places. And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. ¶ Now the
- * ch. 11, 23.
 & 15, 14.
 2 Kin. 12, 3.
 2 Chr. 19, 2.
 2 Cor. 6, 14.

¹ Heb. *bosom*.

² Heb. *ctur*.

the king was stayed up in his chariot] The king's wound made it impossible for him to remain standing without help; he therefore had himself supported in his chariot by attendants, in order that his soldiers might not lose heart, as they would be sure to do, if they knew of his peril. Ahab must not be denied the credit of right princely fortitude on this occasion.

the midst of the chariot] Lit., as in margin. The "bosom" of the chariot is the rounded front, with the portion of the standing board that adjoined it. Here the blood would naturally collect, forming a pool, in which the king and his charioteer must have stood.

36. about the going down of the sun] i.e. as soon as Ahab was dead. The abandonment of the expedition and dispersion of the army on the death of the king is thoroughly Oriental.

The LXX. version reads *rr. 36, 37*, "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country; for the king is dead: And they came to Samaria," &c.

38. they washed his armour] Rather, "the harlots bathed in it." The "pool of Samaria," which was stained with Ahab's blood by the washing of his chariot in it, was, according to Josephus, the usual bathing-place of the Samaritan harlots. A large tank or reservoir, probably identical with this pool, still remains on the slope of the hill of Samaria, immediately outside the walls.

39. the ivory house] So called from the character of its ornamentation. Ivory was

largely used in the ancient world as a covering of wood-work, and seems to have been applied, not only to furniture, but to the doors and walls of houses.

Nothing is known of the cities built by Ahab; but the fact is important as indicating the general prosperity of the country in his time, and his own activity as a ruler. Prosperity, it is plain, may for a while co-exist with causes—such as, the decay of religion—which are sapping the vital power of a nation, and leading it surely, if slowly, to destruction.

the book of the chronicles, &c.] See above, xiv. 19, xv. 31, xvi. 5, 14, 20, 27.

41. The writer returns to the history of the kingdom of Judah (connect this verse with xv. 24), sketching briefly a reign much more fully given by the writer of Chronicles (2 Chr. xvii-xx). Cp. also the marg. ref.

43. On the general piety of Asa, see above, xv. 11-15 and ref. Jehoshaphat seems to have been a still better king; for he did not, like Asa, fall away in his old age (2 Chr. xvi. 2-12).

the high places were not taken away] This seems to contradict 2 Chr. xvii. 6. Probably the writer of Chronicles refers to the desire and intention of the monarch, while the author of Kings records the practical failure of his efforts.

44. This refers probably to an early period in Jehoshaphat's reign—about his eighth or his ninth year—when he closed the long series of wars between the two kingdoms by a formal peace, perhaps at

45 rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he shewed,
 and how he warred, are they not written in the book of the
 46 chronicles of the kings of Judah? ^v And the remnant of the
 sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took
 47 out of the land. ² There was then no king in Edom: a deputy
 48 was king. ¶ ^a Jehoshaphat ^{1b} made ships of Tharshish to go to
 Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken
 49 at "Ezion-geber. Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Je-
 hoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships.
 50 But Jehoshaphat would not. ¶ ^c And Jehoshaphat slept with his
 fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his
 51 father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. ¶ ^d Ahaziah
 the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seven-
 52 teenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years
 over Israel. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and
^e walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother,
 and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel
 53 to sin: for ^h he served Baal, and worshipped him, and pro-
 voked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his
 father had done.

^v ch. 11. 21.
 & 15. 12.
² Gen. 25. 23.
^a 2 Sam. 8. 14.
^c 2 Chr. 20.
 35, &c.
^d ch. 10. 22.
^e 2 Chr. 20. 37.
^f ch. 9. 26.
^g 2 Chr. 21. 1.

^h ver. 40.

ⁱ ch. 15. 26.

^h Judg. 2. 11.
 ch. 16. 31.

¹ Or, had ten ships.

once cemented by a marriage between Jehoram and Athaliah (r. 2 note).

46. *the book of the chronicles, &c.*] Cp. r. 39 note. The biographer of Jehoshaphat appears to have been Jehu, the son of Hanani (2 Chr. xx. 34).

48. See marg. ref. notes.

47. In the time of Solomon, Hadad (xi. 14), according to the LXX., "reigned over Edom." It appears by the present passage that the country had been again reduced, either by Jehoshaphat, or by an earlier king, and was dependent on the kingdom of Judah, being governed by a "deputy" or viceroy, who, however, was allowed the royal title (cp. 2 K. iii. 9, 12, 26). This government of dependencies by means of subject kings was the all but universal practice in the East down to the time of Cyrus (iv. 21 note).

48. The expression, "ships of Tharshish," probably designates ships of a particular class, ships (i.e.) like those with which the Phoenicians used to trade to Tharshish (Tartessus, x. 22 note). Cp. the use of "Indiaman" for a vessel of a certain class. Jehoshaphat's fleet was constructed at Ezion-Geber, on the Red Sea (2 Chr. xx. 36), where Solomon had previously built a navy (ix. 26). Being lord-paramount of Edom,

Jehoshaphat had the right of using this harbour.

49. 2 Chr. xx. 35, 36, explains that the two kings conjointly built the fleet with which the Ophir trade (ix. 28 note) was to be reopened. Ahaziah had thus an interest in the ships; and when they were wrecked, attributing, as it would seem, the calamity to the unskilfulness of his ally's mariners, he proposed that the fleet should be manned in part by Israelite sailors—men probably accustomed to the sea, perhaps trained at Tyre. This proposal Jehoshaphat refused, either offended at the reflection on his subjects' skill, or accepting the wreck of the ships, which Eliezer had prophesied, as a proof that God was against the entire undertaking.

51. *two years*] According to our reckoning, not much more than a twelvemonth.

52. *in the way of his mother*] In this phrase, which does not occur anywhere else, we see the strong feeling of the writer as to the influence of Jezebel (cp. xvi. 31).

51-53. It would be of advantage if these verses were transferred to the Second Book of Kings, which would thus open with the commencement of Ahaziah's reign. The division of the Books does not proceed from the author. See "Introd.," p. 263.